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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE

CHARACTERISTICS OF FOOD STAMP HOUSEHOLDS  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Food and Nutrition Service has conducted periodic surveys of food stamp households to determine the characteristics and circumstances of program beneficiaries. This report presents the results of the most recent survey of over 7,500 participating households in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. The report has two objectives: a description of the economic and demographic circumstances of food stamp participants in August 1981 and an examination of changes in these circumstances since implementation of the Food Stamp Act of 1977.

Over 20 million people in the United States--and nearly 2 million more in Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands--received food stamp benefits in August 1981. The results presented here portray a cross section of this caseload just prior to the implementation of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act and the Food Stamp and Commodity Distribution Amendments of 1981. At the time these data were gathered:

- o The average gross income of all participating households was \$349 per month. Over 7 percent reported no gross income for the month. Over 30 percent of all food stamp households had a total gross income that was less than half of the official poverty guidelines; nearly 90 percent were below the poverty line.
- o Nearly 40 percent of all food stamp households also received benefits under Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Almost 20 percent had earned income. Both Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) were received by just over 19 percent of all food stamp households.
- o The average deduction from gross income was \$169 per month. The most frequent deduction--other than the standard deduction available to every household--was for excess shelter costs, claimed by nearly 70 percent of all food stamp households. About 20 percent claimed a deduction for earned income. Both the dependent care and medical deductions were used relatively infrequently--by about 2 percent of all food stamp households--but they provided a substantial deduction for those households able to claim them.

- o The average monthly food stamp benefit was \$103 per household. Nearly 19 percent of all food stamp households had no net income after taking the allowable deductions from gross income, and thus received the maximum allowable benefit. About 6 percent received the minimum \$10 benefit guaranteed to all participating one- and two-person households.
- o When food stamp benefits were counted along with cash income, the percentage of food stamp households below the poverty line fell from 90 percent to 82 percent. Program benefits had an even greater effect on the poorest households: the income of nearly 20 percent of the participating households rose to at least half of the poverty line as a result of their food stamp benefit.
- o The average food stamp household included 2.7 people, but there was substantial variation among different household types. Households with school-age children included an average of 4.0 people. Households with earned income averaged 3.6 people. Households with elderly members were typically smaller, averaging only 1.5 persons. Over half of all food stamp households had only one or two people.
- o Approximately 70 percent of the heads of food stamp households were women. The average age of female household heads was 41 years; the average age of male heads was 44 years.
- o Forty-seven percent of all the people participating in the Food Stamp Program were children (less than 18 years old). Nine percent were elderly (60 years old or older). About 3 percent were disabled. Thus about 60 percent of all food stamp participants were either very young, very old, or disabled.
- o Over 20 percent of all food stamp households had at least one elderly member. Over 90 percent of all elderly participants lived alone or with one other person (usually elderly as well). After adjusting for the differences in average household size, households with elderly members had relatively higher income, and consequently lower benefits, than households with no elderly members. Only 7 percent of the households with elderly members had a gross income that was less than half of the poverty line. Nineteen percent received the \$10 minimum benefit.
- o Approximately one-fifth of all food stamp households reported earned income. These

households tended to be larger than average and had relatively high income (\$564 per month, on average). About 55 percent of these households had no additional income beyond their earnings.

- o Slightly more than half of all participating food stamp households included children. These households were predominantly headed by women. Households with children were typically larger and had higher incomes than those without children.

The Food Stamp Program grew fairly rapidly between 1979 and 1981, partly because of legislative changes embodied in the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-113) and partly because of worsening economic conditions. Implementation of Public Law 95-113 changed the size and composition of the food stamp caseload markedly. On balance, households entering the program during the first half of 1979 were poorer, more elderly, and more southern than previous participants. From late 1979 through 1981, in contrast, the basic demographic character of the food stamp population remained stable. The percentage of families with female heads and dependent children increased slightly from 41 percent to 43 percent. The proportion of households with earned income was unchanged at 20 percent. The proportion of households with elderly members dropped slightly from 24 percent to 21 percent.

A comparison of survey data from November 1979 with the results of the current survey shows that:

- o Average monthly gross income rose from \$314 per household in November 1979 to \$349 in August 1981, an increase of just over 11 percent. After taking account of a 21-percent increase in the Consumer Price Index, however, real gross income actually fell nearly 9 percent. The decline in average real income among food stamp households reflected both a deterioration of the economic circumstances of the average household and attempts to target program benefits on those in greatest need.
- o The percentage of food stamp households with gross income above the poverty line fell from 18 percent in November 1979 to 10 percent in August 1981. The percentage of households below half the poverty line increased from 22 percent to 32 percent.
- o All food stamp households were not equally affected by inflation. Automatic cost-of-living adjustments to Social Security and SSI payments protected the purchasing power of many elderly and disabled food stamp participants. The real value of Social Security and SSI benefits among food

stamp households increased by slightly less than 3 percent and nearly 6 percent, respectively. In contrast, AFDC benefits were set by the States and were not generally indexed. As a result, the average AFDC payment to food stamp households declined 7 percent in real terms. Similarly, the real value of wages and salaries fell about 5 percent.

- o The percentage of food stamp households that claimed each deduction remained fairly stable. The excess shelter deduction was claimed by about two-thirds of the participating households. The value of the shelter deduction, averaged over those households that claimed it, increased about 45 percent, from \$62 to \$90 per month. The earned income deduction was claimed by one-fifth of all food stamp households, but its average value actually fell 9 percent, reflecting a drop in average earnings. Both the dependent care and medical deductions resulted in substantial deductions when they were claimed. But because so few households claimed these particular deductions--approximately 2 percent--they did not have much impact on the change in the overall level of deductions.
- o The relatively rapid increase in the excess shelter deduction was caused by a substantial growth (119 percent) in the deduction claimed by households with elderly or disabled members, reflecting both their exemption from the ceiling on the combined value of the dependent care and excess shelter deductions and increases in actual shelter costs. Increases in the average deduction for most households generally kept pace with rising shelter costs.
- o The average monthly food stamp benefit increased from \$82 per household in November 1979 to \$103 in August 1981. This increase was caused by regular adjustments of nominal food stamp benefits and shifts in the economic circumstances of food stamp households. The maximum coupon allotment for a family of four rose 14 percent over this period. Average gross income grew at approximately half the rate of general inflation while the average deduction grew somewhat more rapidly. This contributed to the absence of growth in average net income which, in turn, contributed to larger benefits.

## INTRODUCTION

The Food Stamp Program is a nationwide program which helps low-income families and individuals buy the foods they need to maintain an adequate diet. This assistance is in the form of coupons that can be redeemed for food in authorized food stores, thus increasing the purchasing power of low-income households. The program is authorized by Congress, administered nationally by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), and run through State welfare agencies and their local offices. An average of more than 22 million people received food stamp benefits each month during fiscal year 1981 at a total cost of over \$11 billion.

Because food stamp benefits add to the resources available to low-income households, the Food Stamp Program can be considered part of the Federal income maintenance system. It is distinct from other income maintenance programs in two important ways. First, it is designed to provide nutritional assistance to low-income households. Thus, program benefits--the food stamps--can be used only to buy food. Second, the program is distinguished by the absence of categorical restrictions on eligibility and participation. Unlike Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), for example, program eligibility is not limited to specific types of people (for example, mothers with dependent children, the elderly, or the disabled). Instead, the Food Stamp Program is available to all who meet the income and resource standards set by Congress. Thus, program participants thus are likely to represent a broad spectrum of the low-income population.

The Food and Nutrition Service has conducted periodic surveys of food stamp households to determine the characteristics and circumstances of program beneficiaries. This report presents the results of the most recent survey of over 7,500 participating households in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. The report has two objectives: a description of the economic and demographic circumstances of food stamp participants in August 1981 and an examination of changes in these circumstances since implementation of the Food Stamp Act of 1977.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the structure, size, and economic context of the Food Stamp Program in August 1981. Chapter 2 describes August 1981 food stamp household circumstances in some detail while chapter 3 looks at trends in household circumstances and caseload composition from 1979 to 1981. Chapter 4 presents an extensive set of detailed tabulations of household characteristics in August 1981. The appendixes to this report contain supplemental tables and a brief description of the sample design. Unless otherwise noted, the reference population for the discussion which follows and for the detailed tables in chapter 4 is the August 1981 food stamp population in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. Selected tables in appendix A expand the reference population to include participants in Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.

## CHAPTER 1: AN OVERVIEW OF THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

Both the structure of the Food Stamp Program and the characteristics of program participants change over time. As eligibility requirements established by Congress change, the number and characteristics of participating households change. Similarly, the economic health of the Nation or underlying demographic trends may alter the need for program benefits in general or in particular segments of the population. This chapter provides some background on the general context of the Food Stamp Program for both August 1981 and the period from 1979 through 1981.

The chapter begins with an overview of the eligibility requirements that were in place in August 1981 and a brief sketch of the recent legislative history of the program. This leads to a brief discussion of total program costs and participation from 1979 to 1981. The chapter ends with a summary of economic conditions over the same general period.

### PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS IN AUGUST 1981<sup>1</sup>

Each household had to meet certain uniform standards to qualify for food stamp benefits in August 1981. These included an income limit, a resource limit, and a variety of nonfinancial criteria. Each of these is discussed briefly below.

#### Income Eligibility Standards

To be eligible for food stamps, a household's net income after certain allowable deductions from its gross income had to fall below the Federal poverty guidelines. Gross income included all cash payments

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<sup>1</sup> This discussion is based on the structure of the Food Stamp Program as it existed in August 1981. While many of the rules described are still in place, some are not. The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 and the Food Stamp and Commodity Distribution Amendments of 1981 modified several aspects of the program for fiscal year 1982. The Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1982 made additional changes beginning in fiscal year 1983. Because these changes were not in place in August 1981 and did not affect the eligibility or benefits of the food stamp households described in this report, they are not discussed here. The reader should not interpret this section as a description of the current Food Stamp Program.

to the household with the exception of a few specific types excluded by law or regulation (such as loans, nonrecurring lump sum payments, and reimbursement of certain expenses). The following deductions were then subtracted from the household's gross income to determine its net income:

- o A standard deduction adjusted periodically to reflect changes in the cost of living. The standard deduction was \$85 in the 48 contiguous States and the District of Columbia in August 1981.
- o An earned income deduction for working households equal to 20 percent of the combined earnings of household members.
- o A dependent care deduction for the expenses involved in caring for children or other dependents while household members worked or sought employment.
- o An excess shelter deduction for those shelter costs (such as rent, mortgage payments, utility bills, property taxes, and insurance) that exceeded 50 percent of the household's income remaining after all other deductions were taken. For most households, the combined value of the dependent care and excess shelter deductions could not exceed a maximum set by law and adjusted periodically to reflect changes in the cost of living. The limit in August 1981 for households living in the 48 contiguous States and the District of Columbia was \$115.<sup>2</sup> Households with an elderly (age 60 or older) or disabled member were exempted from this limit--they were entitled to subtract the full value of all shelter costs greater than 50 percent of their adjusted income.
- o In addition, households with an elderly or disabled member could qualify for a special medical deduction. These households could deduct all medical costs exceeding \$35 incurred by the elderly or disabled person. Medical expenses reimbursed by insurance or government programs were not deductible.

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<sup>2</sup> Both the standard deduction and the ceiling on the combined value of the dependent care and excess shelter deductions in Alaska, Hawaii, and the outlying areas of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands were adjusted to reflect price differences from the mainland. See appendix D for the value of each in August 1981.



After subtracting these allowable deductions from gross income, the household's net income was then compared to a table of monthly income limits based on the official poverty guidelines set by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). These guidelines vary by household size and are updated annually to reflect changes in the cost of living. The Food Stamp Program income limits are adjusted each July to correspond to the most recent OMB poverty guidelines. In August 1981, a four-person family living in one of the 48 contiguous States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, or the Virgin Islands could qualify for the program with a net monthly income of \$705 or less.<sup>3</sup>

Resource  
Eligibility  
Standards

The value of assets available to a household further restricted program eligibility. Most households were permitted up to \$1,500 in countable resources. Households with two or more people, at least one of whom was 60 years old or older, were allowed up to \$3,000. Countable resources included cash on hand and assets which could easily be converted to cash, such as money in checking or savings accounts, savings certificates, stocks or bonds, and lump sum payments. They also included such nonliquid assets as personal property, vehicles, buildings, and land. The family home and lot, one family car if under \$4,500 in value, and tools of a trade or business property used in earning the family income were not counted.

Nonfinancial  
Eligibility  
Standards

People could qualify for benefits only as part of a "food stamp household." In general terms, a food stamp household consisted of an individual who lived alone or who lived with others but usually purchased and prepared food separately; and groups of individuals who lived, purchased food, and prepared meals together. Some restrictions were placed on the participation of aliens, students, strikers, and residents of institutions. The income, resources, and deductible expenses of all persons in the food stamp household were counted to determine the household's eligibility for benefits.

The Food Stamp Program included several provisions to encourage able-bodied participants to seek and hold jobs. With certain exceptions, physically and mentally fit food stamp participants had to register for and accept suitable employment. The exceptions to this work registration requirement included:

- o People under 18 or over 60 years of age.

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<sup>3</sup> Separate income limits were also computed for both Alaska and Hawaii. See appendix C for the full array for each household size.

- o Physically or mentally disabled people.
- o People participating in AFDC's work incentive program (WIN).
- o Caretakers of dependent children less than 12 years old or incapacitated adults.
- o Caretakers of dependent children less than 18 years old in households where another able-bodied parent was registered for work or working full time.
- o People receiving unemployment compensation.
- o Participants in drug addiction or alcoholic treatment and rehabilitation programs.
- o People who were working at least 30 hours per week.
- o Selected types of students.

An active job search was required of some work registrants. Furthermore, applicant households whose primary wage earner voluntarily quit a job without good cause were not eligible for 60 days.

#### Benefit Computation

The maximum amount of food stamps a household could receive was equal to the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) adjusted for different household sizes. The maximum allotments are revised periodically to reflect changes in the cost of foods included in the TFP. The maximum allotment for a family of four in the 48 States and the District of Columbia was \$233 per month in August 1981.<sup>4</sup>

The value of food stamp benefits issued to each household was based on the number of people in the household and the amount of net income available after subtracting the allowable deductions. Monthly benefits were equal to the maximum coupon allotment for that household less 30 percent of its net income. All one- and two-person households that qualified for the program, however, were guaranteed a minimum benefit of at least \$10 per month.

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<sup>4</sup> Separate plans were developed for selected outlying areas. The maximum coupon allotments for each household size in the 48 States and the District of Columbia, Alaska, Hawaii, and the outlying areas of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands are shown in appendix E.

RECENT  
LEGISLATIVE  
CHANGES

The structure of the Food Stamp Program described in the preceding section is substantially different from the program prior to the implementation of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-113). The changes in this law which affected eligibility and participation fell into two major categories. One was the elimination of the purchase requirement. Prior to January 1979, food stamp participants obtained stamps by exchanging cash for a predetermined coupon allotment. Since the value of the allotment exceeded the cash purchase requirement, the participant received a net benefit--the difference between these two amounts--known as the "bonus." Beginning in January 1979, participants received only the bonus amount and no longer purchased a portion of the allotment.

The second major category of changes in the 1977 Act restricted program eligibility with new provisions that:

- o Lowered the limits on allowable net income.
- o Reduced the number of different allowable deductions, replacing most itemized deductions with a uniform standard.
- o Limited the amounts of the remaining itemized deductions.
- o Set a limit on the market value of cars that participants might own.
- o Made work registration requirements more stringent and made applicants who voluntarily quit a job ineligible for 60 days.
- o Eliminated categorical food stamp eligibility for AFDC and SSI recipients.
- o Eliminated students who were tax dependents of an ineligible household, and required all students to register for part-time work during the school year and full-time work during school vacations.
- o Disqualified those found to have committed fraud.

States were required to begin certifying new applicants under the new eligibility rules in March 1979 and convert all ongoing participants to the new rules by July 1979.

More recent changes further restricted the number of persons eligible for the program and reduced the number of participants. The Food Stamp Amendments of 1979 (Public Law 96-58) tightened the administration of the program by (1) requiring all applicants to

provide their Social Security numbers, (2) requiring persons disqualified for fraud to agree to pay back any improperly received benefits before they again participate in the program, (3) substantially increasing Federal funding for the investigation and prosecution of fraud, and (4) allowing States to keep a portion of the money they recover through fraud investigations. In addition, the 1979 amendments enabled households containing an elderly or disabled person to deduct excess medical expenses and to take deductions for all excess shelter costs with no limit on the value of the combined dependent care and excess shelter deductions beginning in January 1980.

The Food Stamp Act was again amended in 1980 (Public Law 96-249) to further reduce the net income limits, lower the resource limits for most households, and eliminate most college students from the program. Benefits were reduced by changing the cost-of-living adjustments to the maximum coupon allotments and to the standard deduction from a semiannual to an annual schedule. In addition, the 1980 amendments initiated an error rate sanction system which penalizes States that fail to make progress in reducing error rates. The amendments expanded verification procedures to establish the accuracy of food stamp applicants' statements, allowed States to require that participants' incomes be reported monthly, allowed States to use past income to determine eligibility, and required participants to carry photographic identification cards in areas that have substantial problems with fraud.

While not reflected in the survey data described in this report, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (Public Law 97-35) and the Food Stamp and Commodity Distribution Amendments of 1981 (Public Law 97-98) further restricted participation and benefits. Among other changes these laws:

- o Established a gross income eligibility standard (at 130 percent of the poverty line) for all households except those with elderly or disabled members.
- o Reduced the earned income deduction from 20 to 18 percent.
- o Required proration of food stamp benefits from the date of application for the first month of participation.
- o Further restricted the participation of strikers and boarders.

- o Required that children living with their parents under 60 years of age must be counted as a single household.
- o Delayed the cost-of-living adjustments to coupon allotments, the standard deduction, and the ceiling on the combined value of the dependent care and excess shelter deduction.
- o Mandated monthly reporting and retrospective accounting beginning in October 1983.
- o Created a Nutrition Assistance Block Grant for Puerto Rico beginning in July 1982.

FOOD STAMP  
PROGRAM  
PARTICIPATION  
AND COST

The Food Stamp Program has exhibited substantial increases in the number of participants in recent years (see figure 1). After 3 years of declining caseloads, from 1976 through 1978, the program grew from 17.3 million participants at the beginning of 1979 to a peak of 23.0 million in March 1981 and then subsided in a normal seasonal decline. In August 1981, there were approximately 22.2 million participants, including about 1.8 million in Puerto Rico and 0.1 million in Guam and the Virgin Islands.

Because of the increased number of participants, in combination with rising food prices, total program costs also grew dramatically. Total Federal costs in fiscal year 1979 amounted to \$6.9 billion, of which \$6.5 billion were issued in benefits. By fiscal year 1981, total program costs were \$11.3 billion, of which \$10.6 billion were benefits. Total program costs were about \$950 million for the month of August 1981.

A substantial portion of this growth, particularly during 1979, can be attributed to the implementation of the major reforms included in the Food Stamp Act of 1977.<sup>5</sup> An estimated 4.0 to 5.2 million new participants joined the program as a result of these reforms, especially the elimination of the purchase requirement. This increase was partially offset by tightened eligibility restrictions which removed some 500,000 to 700,000 people from the program.

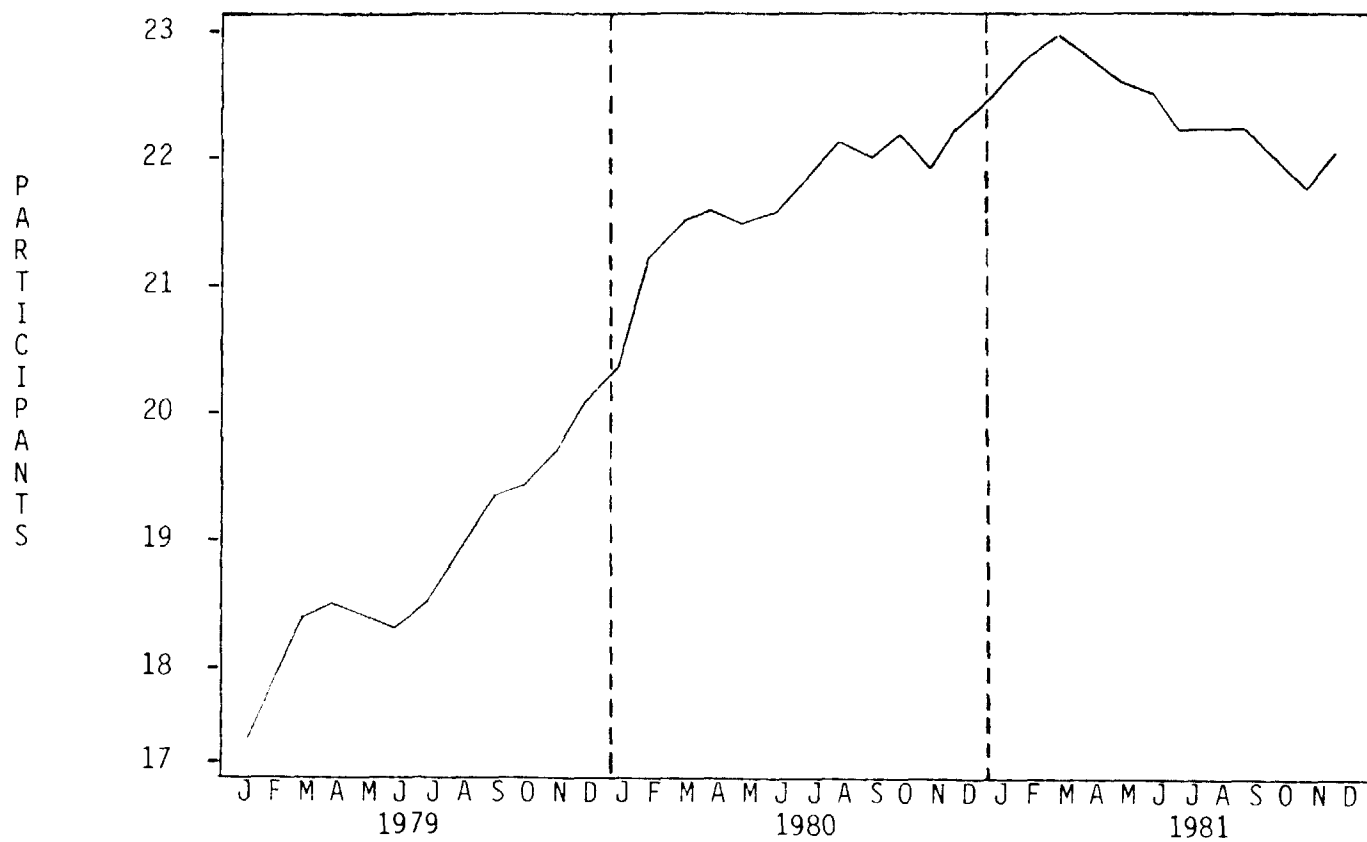
Deteriorating economic conditions also contributed to the growth in participation over this period. The Food Stamp Program is more responsive to changes in general economic conditions than most other social welfare and income maintenance programs (such as AFDC or SSI) because it has no major categorical

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<sup>5</sup> Effects of the 1977 Food Stamp Act: Second Annual Report to the Congress, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, January 1981.

FIGURE 1

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM PARTICIPATION: 1979-81  
(Number of participants in millions)



Source: Food Stamp Program Statistical Summary of Operations.

Note: Participation counts include the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.

restrictions on eligibility and participation. Thus, it is important to examine program participation trends within a more general economic context.

#### AN OVERVIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS THROUGH 1981

During the 1970's the economy of the United States, along with most of the world, became increasingly vulnerable to "stagflation"--a condition of stagnation or decline in productivity, production, and employment, accompanied by high and rising price inflation. The severe oil price shocks in 1974-75 and again in 1979-80 contributed each time to a serious worsening of economic performance in both respects.

Table 1 shows the stagflation pattern as it developed for the U.S. economy during the late 1970's and up through 1981. The growth of real Gross National Product (GNP) slowed markedly in the late 1970's, with real GNP showing an overall annual decline by 1980. The underlying growth in productivity slowed even more sharply during this period. Unemployment improved steadily following the recession of 1974-75, but then started upward again late in 1979 as shown in figure 2. Throughout the entire period the broadest measure of price inflation for the economy, the GNP deflator, accelerated in every year, while interest rates rose in every year from 1978 through 1981.

Not only was the economy slowing down during this period, but by 1980-81 it was showing marked shortrun instability as well. Table 2 shows the sharp quarterly changes in production, employment, and inflation rates that characterized these 2 years.

These worsening economic conditions--especially rising unemployment and inflation--bore particularly hard on lower income families and individuals. Participation in the Food Stamp Program has always responded to changes in the level of unemployment (although with a time lag). The sharp jumps in unemployment in the second quarter of 1980 and the second half of 1981 were reflected in rising food stamp participation throughout much of the period and again in 1982.

The strong inflationary pressure of the period also contributed to Food Stamp Program participation and cost increases. The relation of inflation to program costs was, in part, very direct: the cost of food stamp benefits rose to match the increased price of foods included in the Thrifty Food Plan. However, the high inflation rates of 1979-81 also contributed indirectly to the increase in program costs through

Table 1--Major Economic Indicators, 1976-81

(Average annual rates in percent)

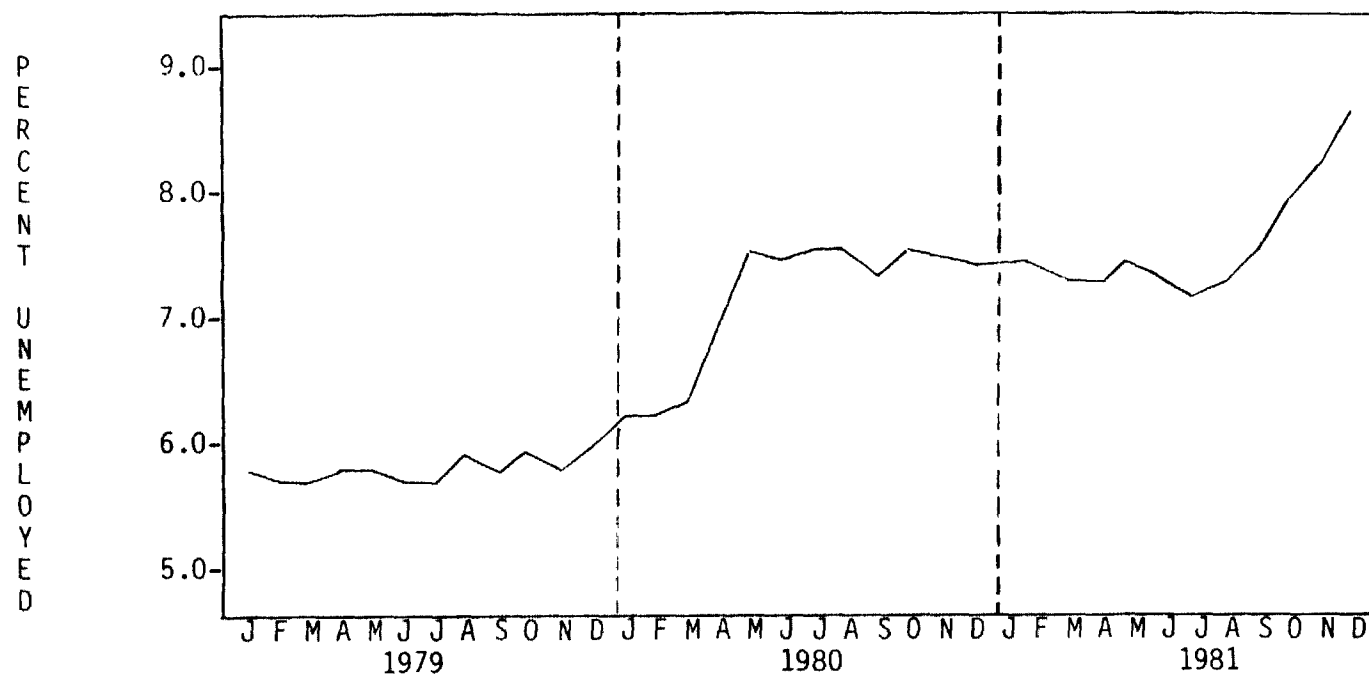
Economic indicator	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Real GNP increase	5.4	5.5	5.0	2.8	-0.4	1.9
Productivity increase <sup>a</sup>	3.2	2.2	0.6	-1.3	-0.9	1.4
Unemployment rate	7.7	7.1	6.1	5.8	7.1	7.6
Inflation rate <sup>b</sup>	5.2	5.8	7.4	8.6	9.3	9.4
Interest rates <sup>c</sup>	8.4	8.0	8.7	9.6	11.9	14.2

Source: Economic Report of the President, February 1983.<sup>a</sup> Change in output per hour, nonfarm business sector.<sup>b</sup> Change in implicit price deflator for gross national product.<sup>c</sup> Corporate Aaa bond yield.



FIGURE 2

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, 1979-81  
(Seasonally adjusted)



SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Table 2--Major Quarterly Economic Indicators, 1980 and 1981

Economic Indicator	1980				1981			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Real GNP increase <sup>a</sup>	1.5	-9.6	1.6	4.3	7.9	-1.5	2.2	-5.3
Unemployment rate (final month each quarter)	6.3	7.5	7.5	7.3	7.3	7.4	7.6	8.6
Inflation rate <sup>b</sup>	10.5	10.1	9.6	10.5	10.9	6.8	9.0	8.8

Source: Economic Report of the President, February 1983.

<sup>a</sup> Percentage change from preceding quarter, at seasonally adjusted annual rate.

<sup>b</sup> Percentage change from preceding quarter in implicit GNP price deflator, at annual rates.

their influence on participation levels. A decline in real income, caused by the failure of money income to keep up with inflation, made a growing number of households eligible for food stamp benefits.

The growth of the population potentially eligible for food stamps over this period can be seen in the number of persons with incomes falling near or below the poverty line, as shown in table 3. There were 31.8 million people classified as poor in 1981, an increase of 5.8 million over the number in 1979. The poverty rate rose from 11.7 to 14.0 percent over the period. Similarly, the number of persons below 125 percent of the poverty line increased by 7.1 million.

Table 3--Poverty Status of all Persons, 1979-81  
(Number in thousands)

	1979	1980	1981
Number below 100 percent of poverty	26,072	29,272	31,822
Percentage of total population	11.7%	13.0%	14.0%
Number below 125 percent of poverty	36,616	40,658	43,748
Percentage of total population	16.4%	18.1%	19.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 134, Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States: 1981 (Advance Data from the March 1982 Current Population Survey), Washington, D.C., 1982.

## CHAPTER 2: CHARACTERISTICS OF FOOD STAMP HOUSEHOLDS

Approximately 20 million people in 7.7 million households received food stamp benefits in August 1981.<sup>6</sup> This chapter addresses basic questions about the characteristics of these households by looking at their income, deductions, benefits, assets, and household composition in some detail. The results presented here portray a cross section of the program's caseload just prior to the implementation of program changes required by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 and the Food Stamp and Commodity Distribution Amendments of 1981. Most of the information in this chapter deals with characteristics of the entire food stamp household. In some cases, however, characteristics of individual participants are also presented. Additional information about each topic can be found in the detailed tabulations of chapter 5.

GROSS MONTHLY  
INCOME

The average gross income of all participating households in the 50 States and the District of Columbia was \$349 per month.<sup>7</sup> Over 7 percent reported no gross income in August 1981; nearly half reported a monthly income of less than \$300 (see figure 3). Only 12 percent had monthly income in excess of \$600.

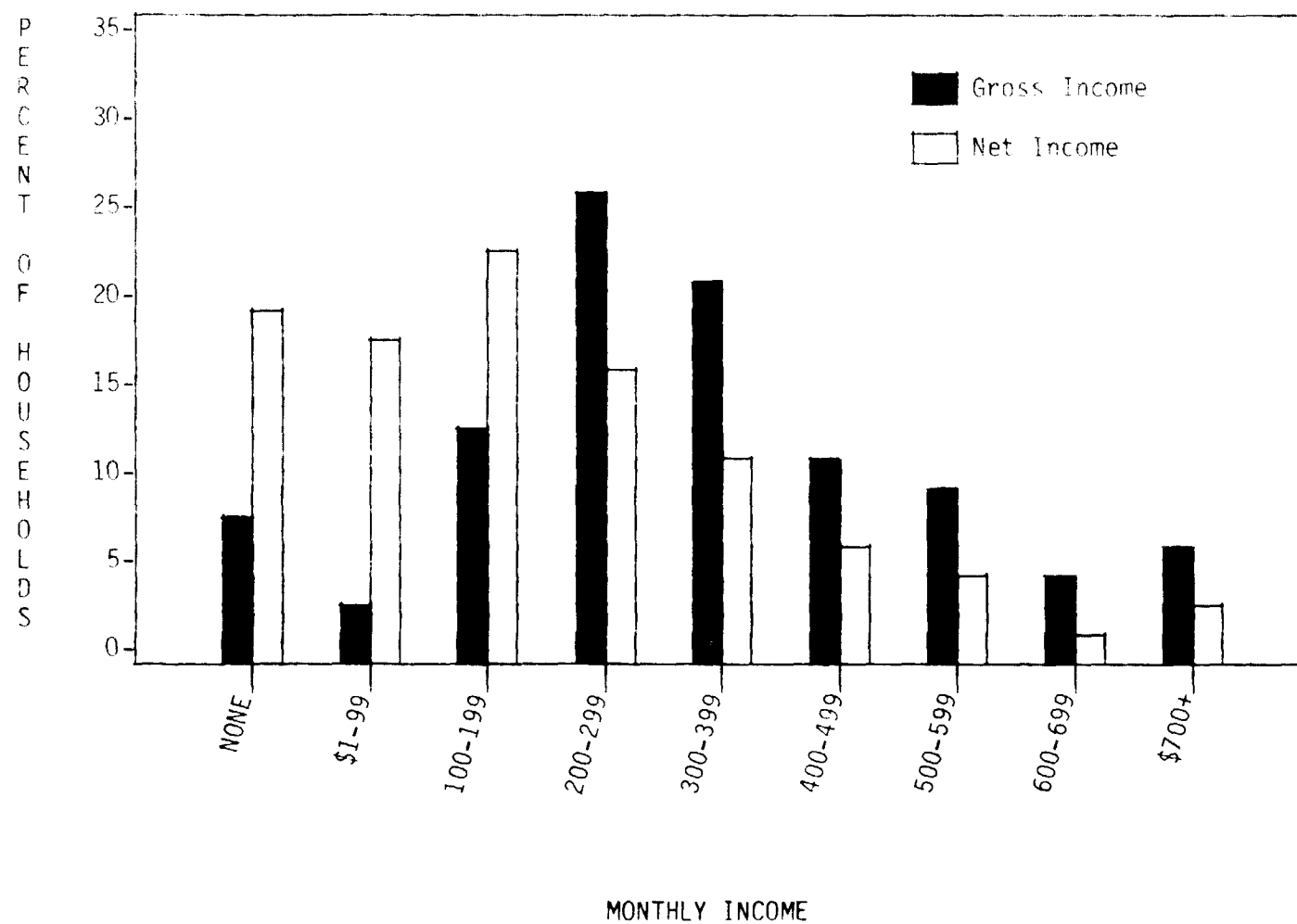
The distribution of gross income was heavily influenced by the large number of small households in the program. Over half of all the households with income below \$300 were single-person households. Over three-quarters of all single-person households had an income below \$300, compared to just one-sixth

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<sup>6</sup> The information reported here and in chapter 4 is limited to August 1981 food stamp participants in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. There were an additional 1.9 million participants in Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. Appendix A contains selected tables for the entire food stamp population.

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that the statistics reported in this and subsequent sections are based on information recorded in food stamp casefiles by State eligibility workers. These figures have not been corrected for possible underreporting or nonreporting of income.

FIGURE 3

DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD STAMP HOUSEHOLDS  
BY MONTHLY INCOME: AUGUST 1981

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control Sample.

of those with at least five members. There were several reasons for this pattern. The food stamp income eligibility limits varied with household size, making small households ineligible at lower income levels than large households. Transfer payments from other welfare programs also tended to increase with household size. The average public assistance payment (including both AFDC and General Assistance) to food stamp households receiving such payments, for example, ranged from \$158 in one-person households to \$484 in households with eight or more persons. In addition, larger households were more likely to have earned income in substantial amounts; only 8 percent of the one-person households reported earnings, averaging \$209 per month, while 30 percent of the four-person households reported average earnings of \$503 per month, and 52 percent of the households with eight or more people reported earnings of \$784.

One way to account for the influence of household size on gross income is to examine the status of food stamp households with respect to the official definition of poverty.<sup>8</sup> As shown in table 4, over 30 percent of all food stamp households had total income that was less than or equal to half of the

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<sup>8</sup> As noted above, the definition of poverty is adjusted for household size. The Office of Management and Budget poverty guidelines used by the Food Stamp Program in August 1981 are shown in appendix B. A word of caution is in order when comparisons are made to the poverty population defined by the Bureau of the Census. Census counts households as poor if their annual cash income falls below the poverty guidelines. In contrast, households were eligible for food stamps if their monthly cash income fell below the program's net income limits. Because household income may vary from month to month, a household may be eligible for food stamps in one month, but ineligible the next. Therefore, some households eligible for food stamps for 1 or more months may have annual incomes above the poverty line. On the other hand, households with assets worth more than the food stamp asset limit could be ineligible for food stamps in any month, although their monthly and annual incomes were well below the poverty line.

Table 4--Poverty Status of Food Stamp Households, August 1981

Gross income as a percentage of Poverty	Percent of all households	Cumulative percent
50% or less	31.6	31.6
51 to 100%	58.2	89.8
101% or more	10.3	100.0
Number of households (in thousands)	7,698	7,698

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.



poverty guidelines; nearly 90 percent were below the poverty line.<sup>9</sup>

#### NET MONTHLY INCOME

A household's net income was determined by subtracting certain allowable deductions from its gross monthly income. The level of net income then determined the household's eligibility and monthly benefit. Average net income was \$196 per month in August 1981. Nearly one-fifth of all households had no net income after subtracting the allowable deductions from their gross income (see figure 3). These households received the maximum coupon allotment. About three-quarters of all participating households had net income less than \$300 per month, and 96 percent had net income under \$600 a month.

#### SOURCE OF INCOME

As table 5 shows, a large number of food stamp households also received cash benefits from at least one of the major income transfer programs (AFDC, Social Security, and SSI). At the same time, there was a substantial number of "working poor," households that supplemented limited earnings with food stamp benefits. Nearly 90 percent of all households had income from at least one of these sources.

#### Aid to Families With Dependent Children

Nearly 40 percent of all food stamp households received AFDC benefits. On average, these households supplemented \$80 from other sources with a \$309 AFDC payment, for a total gross income of \$389 per month. Seventy-five percent of these households, however, had no income other than the AFDC grant. About 12 percent had earnings, 7 percent also received SSI, and 7 percent received Social Security or other retirement benefits.

#### Earned Income

Just under 20 percent of all food stamp households reported income from salaries, wages, and self-employment. Households with earned income were generally larger and had substantially higher income than nonearners. The average household size for those with earnings was 3.6 people. Average earnings amounted to \$452 out of an average gross income of \$563 per month. About 55 percent of these households

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<sup>9</sup> This distribution was affected by the amount of time between the survey month and the most recent adjustment to the poverty line. As income grows over the course of a year, some households may rise above poverty when using monthly equivalents of the poverty standards. With the next cost-of-living adjustment, these households may again be classified as poor. Thus, the proportion of poor households will be highest immediately after each July adjustment and then decline the rest of the year.

Table 5--Major Sources of Income Among Food Stamp Households,  
August 1981

(Number in thousands)

Source of income	Food stamp households	
	Number	Percent <sup>a</sup>
Aid to Families with Dependent Children	3,055	39.7%
Earnings <sup>b</sup>	1,513	19.7
Social Security	1,471	19.1
Supplemental Security Income	1,459	19.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup> Because households may have income from more than one source, these percentages are not additive.

<sup>b</sup> Includes wages, salaries, self-employment, and farm income.

reported no income other than earnings. Approximately 30 percent received AFDC in addition to their earnings.

**Social Security** About one in five participating food stamp households received income from Social Security, averaging about \$282 per month. About 41 percent of these households had no other source of income; about 40 percent also received SSI.

**Supplemental Security Income** Nearly 20 percent of all food stamp households received SSI payments. The average SSI benefit was \$181 per month. This was the only source of income for 32 percent of these households. Another 48 percent received SSI in combination with Social Security and other retirement benefits.

**DEDUCTIONS FROM GROSS INCOME** The Food Stamp Act provides for standardized deductions from gross income when determining household eligibility and benefits. In August 1981 these included a standard deduction for all households, earned income and dependent care deductions for the working poor, a medical deduction for the elderly and disabled, and an excess shelter expense deduction. The combined value of the dependent care and excess shelter deductions was capped for all nonelderly and nondisabled households. The deductions were designed to compensate for certain expenses which make gross income an inaccurate measure of the need for food stamp benefits.

Over 78 percent of all food stamp households claimed at least one deduction other than the standard. The average deduction to which households were entitled, including the value of the standard, was \$169 per month.<sup>10</sup> The average entitlement for all

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<sup>10</sup> A distinction should be made between a household's deduction entitlement and the amount actually used to compute food stamp benefits. The entitlement is the deduction that a household would receive on the basis of its earned income, dependent care costs, shelter costs, and medical expenses if the total of these allowable deductions was less than its gross income. Households with total deductions greater than their gross income "used" only a portion of their deduction entitlement since any negative net incomes were treated as zero in computing benefits. The value of the deductions actually used in August 1981, that is, the difference between average gross and average net income, was \$153, or 90 percent of the average total deduction entitlement of food stamp households.

deductions other than the standard was \$84 per month (see figure 4).

The frequency with which the different deductions were claimed varied dramatically. The excess shelter deduction was claimed by nearly 70 percent of all participating households. The average value of the shelter deduction among those who claimed it was \$90 per month. One-quarter of all food stamp households (and over one-third of those claiming the excess shelter deduction) were affected by the ceiling placed on the combined value of the dependent care and excess shelter deductions. Six percent of all food stamp households (20 percent of the elderly and disabled households), exempted from the ceiling, were entitled to a deduction above the cap. The average shelter deduction among these households was \$197 per month.

Approximately 20 percent of all food stamp households claimed the earned income deduction, averaging \$91 per month. When earned income was present, it was typically present in substantial amounts. Thus, many households with earnings were able to claim sizable deductions: nearly half were entitled to a deduction of more than \$100 a month.

Both the dependent care and medical deductions were used relatively infrequently. For those who were able to claim one or the other, however, they provided a substantial deduction from gross income. The dependent care deduction was claimed by about 2 percent of all participating households and by about 11 percent of those with earned income. Among those with the deduction, the average claim was \$87 per month. Similarly, the medical deduction was claimed by about 2 percent of all participating households but by about 9 percent of all households with elderly members. The average claim among those with the deduction was \$51.

#### FOOD STAMP BENEFITS

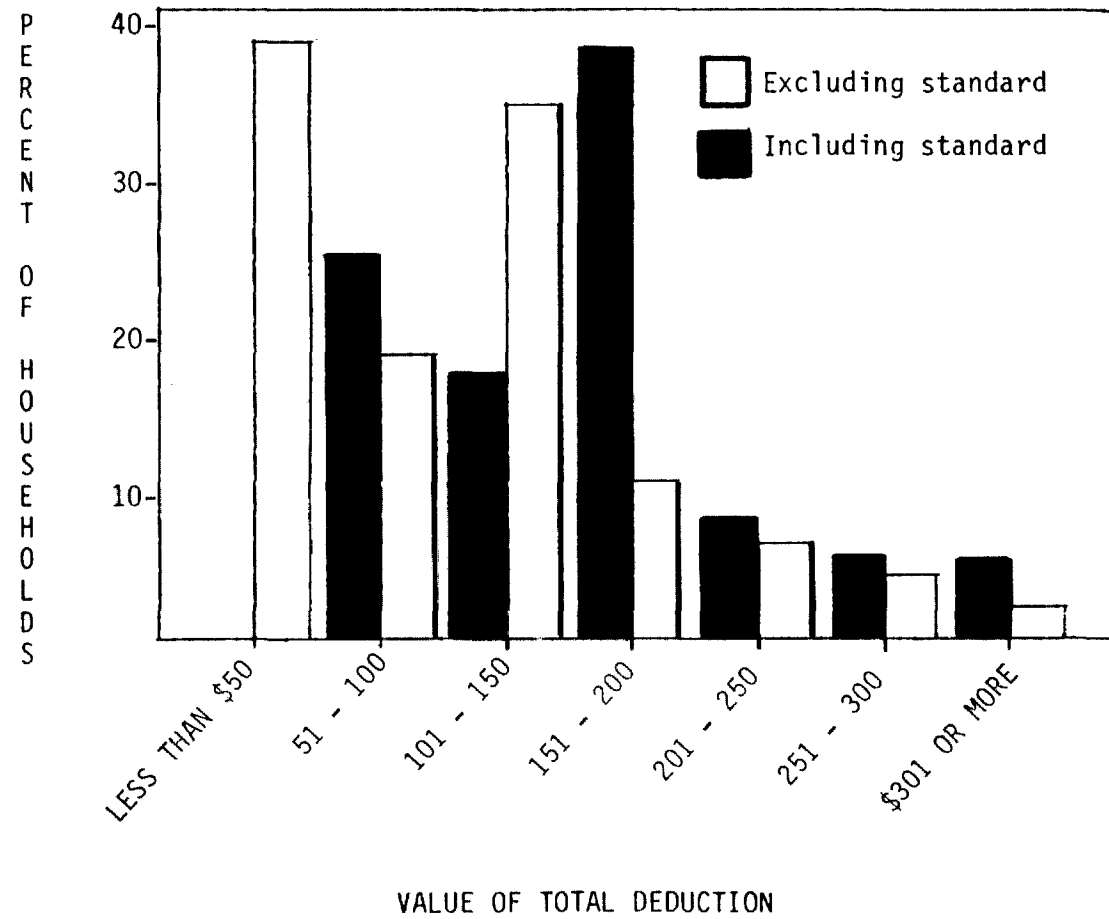
The average monthly food stamp benefit reported in this survey was \$103 per household (or about \$38.50 per person).<sup>11</sup> Over half of all participating

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<sup>11</sup> In comparison to the sample survey data reported here, Food Stamp Program administrative data for August 1981 show an average benefit of \$106 per household and \$40.42 per person (Food Stamp Program Update for August 1982, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, November 1982). Most of the difference is due to sampling error. Because the August 1981 survey is based on a sample of food stamp households, there is some uncertainty associated with a point estimate such as average benefit. In addition, the population from which

FIGURE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD STAMP HOUSEHOLDS  
BY VALUE OF ALL DEDUCTIONS: AUGUST 1981



Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

households received benefits between \$50 and \$150 per month. Nearly 6 percent of the households received the minimum \$10 benefit guaranteed to one- and two-person households. On the basis of their income alone, these households would have been entitled to an average monthly benefit of \$3.

About 70 percent of the households with minimum benefits had at least one elderly member. This high proportion of elderly households was caused by two characteristics. First, elderly participants were typically found in smaller households: 91 percent of the households with elderly contained only one or two persons. Second, households with elderly were relatively better off than those with nonelderly members: the per capita gross and net incomes of elderly households were about twice as high as those of households with no elderly. Thus, they were more likely to be protected by the minimum benefit than other households.

#### Effect on Poverty Status

The previous discussion of gross income levels showed that food stamp participants generally fell well below the poverty line. The official definition of poverty is based on the cash income of household members before taxes and after cash transfer payments, but it does not include the value of in-kind benefits such as food stamps. If the Food Stamp Program is viewed in the general context of income maintenance programs, however, it can be argued that food stamp benefits, which increase a household's total resources, should be included in any measurement of a household's poverty status. In this way, the effect of food stamp benefits in reducing the number of households in poverty can also be measured. Table 6 compares the poverty status of participating households before the transfer of food stamp benefits, based on cash income only, and after the transfer, counting the value of food stamps received along with cash income.<sup>12</sup>

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the Food Stamp Quality Control sample is selected excludes certain categories of households (see appendix F). If the average benefit among the excluded households is higher than average, estimates from the Quality Control sample will be lower than those from program data.

<sup>12</sup> This comparison assumes that program participants value their food stamp benefits at face value. For a general discussion of this and related issues, see U.S. Bureau of the Census, Technical Paper No. 50, Alternative Methods for Valuing Selected In-Kind Transfer Benefits and Measuring Their Effect on Poverty, Washington, D.C., 1982.

Table 6--Effect of Food Stamp Benefits on Poverty Status of Food Stamp Households,  
August 1981

Income as a percent of poverty	Distribution of households in relation to poverty line		Change in percentage points
	Based on cash income only	Based on income and food stamp benefit	
50% or less	31.6%	11.8%	-19.8
51 to 100%	58.2	69.8	+11.6
101% or more	10.3	18.4	+ 8.1
Number of households (in thousands)	7,698	7,698	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

By counting food stamp benefits along with cash income, the percentage of food stamp households below the poverty line fell from 90 percent to 82 percent. In other words, 8 percent of the participating households were moved above the poverty line as a result of their food stamp benefit. Program benefits had an even greater effect on the poorest households; nearly 20 percent of the participating households were moved to at least half of the poverty line as a result of their food stamp benefit. The proportion of food stamp households above the poverty line nearly doubled (from 10 to 18 percent) when food stamp benefits were counted, while the proportion remaining below half of the poverty line was reduced by nearly two-thirds (from 32 to 12 percent).

#### ASSETS

The August 1981 survey collected limited information on the assets of participating households. Over three-fourths of the food stamp households had no assets counted toward the resource limit. Another 20 percent had countable assets of \$500 or less. Households with elderly or disabled members had somewhat higher asset levels, but few had more than \$1,000 in countable resources in spite of a higher resource limit (\$3,000 for each household with at least two members). Across all households, countable assets averaged \$62 in August 1981, while households with elderly members had an average of \$138.

#### CASELOAD COMPOSITION

The average size of a food stamp household was about 2.7 persons in August 1981, but there was considerable variation among different household types. The average for households with school age children, for example, was 4.0 persons. Households with earned income and households with children both averaged 3.6 persons. Households with elderly contained an average of only 1.5 persons. Over one-half of all food stamp households contained only one or two people.

The heads of food stamp households were predominantly female (70 percent). The typical household was led by a woman, with an average age of 41 years. The average age of male household heads was 44 years. Overall, half of all household heads were between 26 and 56 years old. Forty-five percent were white, 37 percent black, and about 10 percent were of Hispanic origin.

The age distribution of all people receiving food stamps was substantially different from the age distribution of household heads. Forty-seven percent of all food stamp participants were 17 years old or younger. Another 9 percent were 60 years or older, and approximately 3 percent were disabled. Thus nearly 60 percent of all food stamp participants were either very young, very old, or disabled.



About 59 percent of all program participants were female. Female adults, ages 18 to 59 years, outnumbered their male counterparts by over 2 to 1. This in large part reflected the sizable number of food stamp households that also received AFDC. It also should be noted that the poverty rate among households headed by females in 1981 was 35 percent--more than twice the overall rate.

Most participating food stamp households could be categorized into a few overlapping but fairly discrete groups: mothers with dependent children, the working poor, and the elderly. As table 7 shows, 73 percent of all food stamp households fell into one or more of these groups: 43 percent were headed by women with dependent children, 20 percent were households reporting earned income, and 21 percent had at least one elderly member. Only 27 percent did not belong to any of these groups.

#### Households With Children

Over three-quarters of all food stamp benefits in August 1981 were issued to households with children, somewhat more than half of all participating households. These households were predominantly headed by women (76 percent).

Households with children were typically larger and had higher income than households without children. The average household size was 3.6 persons in those households with children, compared to an average of 1.4 persons in households without children. The average gross income among households with children was \$408 per month, compared to \$273 per month in those without children. Households with children received an average benefit of \$141 per month (or \$39 per person) while those without children received \$54 per month (or \$38 per person).

Over three-quarters of the households headed by women with children received public assistance. The average size of these households was 3.4 people. These households had an average gross income of \$376, an average net income of \$212, and an average monthly food stamp benefit of \$137 (or \$40 per person).

#### Households With Elderly

Households with elderly members accounted for over 20 percent of the total food stamp caseload in August 1981 but since they were smaller on average and had relatively higher income, they received less than 10 percent of all benefits issued that month. Almost half of all one-person households were elderly (that is, single elderly persons living alone or certified as a separate food stamp unit within a larger household). Over 90 percent of all elderly participants either lived by themselves or with one other person. Nearly 70 percent of all elderly households were headed by women, about 60 percent

Table 7--Food Stamp Caseload Composition, August 1981  
(Number in thousands)

Household type	Food stamp households	
	Number	Percent
Female head with children	2,558	33.2
Elderly	1,452	18.9
Earner	737	9.6
Female head/earner	679	8.8
Elderly/earner	76	1.0
Elderly/female head	62	0.8
Female head/elderly/earner	22	0.3
None of the above	2,112	27.4
Total	7,698	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

were single elderly women living alone and 10 percent were living with others.

After adjusting for the differences in household size, households with elderly members had relatively higher income than those without elderly members. Only 7 percent had a gross income below half of the poverty line. Average gross income per person was nearly twice as high among the elderly--\$219 versus \$118 per month.

Similarly, the average net income of \$122 per person in elderly households was double the \$66 per person found in other households. Thus average benefits per person were substantially less among the elderly--\$31 versus \$39 per month. Over 19 percent of the households with elderly members received the minimum \$10 benefit, compared to 2 percent of the households without elderly persons.

About 88 percent of the elderly households had income from either Social Security or SSI. About 35 percent had income from both. As a result of this coverage, elderly households were less likely than nonelderly households (2 percent versus 9 percent) to report the absence of all income. Only 6 percent of the households with elderly reported earned income, however.

#### Households With Earned Income

One out of every five food stamp households reported earned income in August 1981. They received an approximately proportionate share (21 percent) of benefits issued that month. About 9 percent of all household heads were employed in full-time jobs (that is, working at least 30 hours per week). Another 4 percent were working part time and 1 percent were self-employed. Someone other than the household head was the primary wage earner in the remaining households.

As noted in the earlier discussion of income sources, households with earned income were generally larger than average and somewhat more likely to include children. Because of the relatively large average earnings (\$452 per month) and the higher income limits faced by these households, their gross income was substantially larger than that of households without earnings (\$563 versus \$296). They received an average per capita benefit of about \$31, compared to \$41 among households without earned income.

#### OTHER PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

##### Work Registration

Able-bodied food stamp participants were required to register for work and accept employment if offered. Table 8 shows that nearly 40 percent of all adult participants (that is, those who, on the basis of age alone, could reasonably be presumed able to work) were either employed full time or met the work

Table 8--Work Registration Status of Food Stamp Participants, August 1981

Work registration status	Percentage of adult participants	Percentage of all participants
<u>Meeting work requirement:</u>		
Registered for work	20.3	8.4
Exempted from food stamp registration:		
Employed full time	9.8	3.8
WIN participants	6.7	2.8
UI recipients	2.1	0.8
<u>Exempted from work requirement:</u>		
Caretakers of children and incapacitated adults	41.2	16.9
Disabled	14.4	6.1
Residents of drug addiction/alcohol treatment center	0.5	0.2
Students	1.2	0.9
Less than 18 or over 60 years old	---	56.5
<u>Unknown</u>	3.8	3.5
Number of participants (in thousands)	7,728	20,579

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

registration requirements of the Food Stamp Program, AFDC, or unemployment insurance (UI). Just over 40 percent of all the adults in the program were exempted from work registration because they were responsible for the care of young children or incapacitated adults. About 14 percent of the adults were exempted because of disability.

The August 1981 survey collected, for the first time, work registration data for all household members. (Previous surveys have focused exclusively on household heads.) A significantly different picture of work registration emerges from this information, also shown in table 8. Of all food stamp participants, 56 percent were exempted on the basis of their age. This reflects the large number of children and elderly participants in the Food Stamp Program. The second most frequent exemption, for caretakers of children and incapacitated adults, accounted for 17 percent of all participants. About 8 percent of all food stamp participants were registered for work. Approximately 11 percent of all households with work registrants had more than one.

#### Expedited Service

The Food Stamp Act of 1977 required expedited processing of applications from households that had no net income or that had lost the source of their current income and expected no additional income within 10 days of the application. Households which met these requirements and were otherwise eligible were entitled to receive their food stamp benefits within 3 days. (The normal application processing standard was 30 days.) Of the 491,000 applications approved in August 1981, 138,000 (or 28 percent) were approved under the expedited procedures. While this is a substantial portion of the approved applications, the number of households that received expedited service was less than 2 percent of the total number of households participating that month.

The characteristics of these households reflected the eligibility requirements for expedited service. Their average gross income of \$117 per month was one-third the average for all households, and 61 percent reported no income at all. Similarly, their average net income of \$57 per month was less than one-third of the overall average, and 79 percent had no net income after taking the allowable deductions. Their average benefit was \$119 per month. Households that received expedited service were somewhat smaller than average (2.2 versus 2.7 persons).

#### Certification Periods

In August 1981, about 23 percent of all food stamp households were participating for the first time or participating again after an absence of at least 30 days. For the remaining 77 percent, the most

recent action was a recertification of their previously determined food stamp eligibility.

Food stamp certification periods, that is, the length of time before a household's eligibility must be recertified, varied from household to household. Each household was assigned the longest certification period possible based on the likelihood of changes in its financial circumstances. The average certification period among households participating in August 1981 was 7.8 months.<sup>13</sup>

Certification periods assigned to households that had been previously certified for food stamps, while not substantially different, tended to be somewhat longer than those assigned to households applying for the first time (see table 9). The length of the certification period did depend on the characteristics of the household. The average period was 10 months for households with elderly and 7 months for those with children. Households receiving public assistance had an average period of 8 months, while those with earned income were certified for an average of 6 months. Households that were given expedited service in August 1981 were certified for just under 4 months.

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<sup>13</sup> Two cautionary points should be made. First, the average certification period reported here does not represent the length of continuous participation in the program. It counts only the length of the current certification period. Households with relatively stable circumstances may be certified several times without interrupting program benefits. Second, given current expectations regarding turnover in the Food Stamp Program, this figure probably overstates the actual certification period assigned to all participants over the course of a year. Those with very short periods (1 or 2 months), for example, are probably underrepresented in a monthly cross-sectional sample.

Table 9--Average Length of Certification Period, August 1981  
(In months)

	Initial application	Recertification	All households
Households With:			
Elderly	9.6	10.3	10.2
Public assistance	8.4	8.2	8.2
Children	6.4	7.3	7.1
Earned income	5.0	6.0	5.7
Expedited service	3.7	---	3.7
All households	6.9	8.0	7.8

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

## CHAPTER 3: CHANGES IN FOOD STAMP HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

This chapter explores some of the changes in the composition and circumstances of the food stamp caseload from 1979 to 1981 by looking at survey results from November 1979 and August 1981. As noted in chapter 1, the Food Stamp Program grew fairly rapidly between 1979 and 1981, partly because of legislative changes embodied in the Food Stamp Act of 1977 and partly because of deteriorating economic conditions. The question is whether this growth affected not just the number of participants but also their characteristics and financial circumstances.

An earlier study by FNS reported that the combined effect of the program changes implemented in 1979 was to bring into the program an expanded group of participants who were, on average, more rural, more southern, and more elderly than the previous food stamp caseload.<sup>14</sup> Most of these changes had occurred by the time of the November 1979 survey. This chapter focuses on subsequent changes to see if these trends continued through August 1981. To answer this question, four specific areas of change are examined: income, deductions, average benefits, and household composition.

CHANGES IN  
INCOME

Surveys of food stamp participants conducted by FNS since 1975 have shown that increases in the average income of food stamp households have consistently fallen behind increases in prices.<sup>15</sup> As table 10 shows, this decline in real income continued through August 1981. Average monthly gross income rose from \$314 per household in November 1979 to \$349 in August 1981, a nominal increase of just over 11 percent. After taking into account a 21-percent increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), however, real gross income actually fell nearly 9 percent. By way of comparison, real disposable personal income per person in the United States dropped 4 percent over the same period. Thus, average real income of

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<sup>14</sup> Effects of the 1977 Food Stamp Act of 1977: Second Annual Report to the Congress, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, January 1981.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Characteristics of Food Stamp Households: August 1980 with Comparison 1975-1980, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, December 1981.



Table 10--Average Nominal and Real Monthly Income of Food Stamp Participants,  
November 1979 and August 1981

		August 1981		Percentage Change	
	November 1979	Nominal	Real <sup>a</sup>	Nominal	Real <sup>a</sup>
<u>Average gross income</u>					
Per household	\$314	\$349	\$287	+11.1%	-8.6%
Per person	116	129	106	+11.2	-8.6
<u>Average net income</u>					
Per household	196	196	161	0	-17.9
Per person	73	73	60	0	-9.6

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup> Real income adjusted by change in CPI for all items between November 1979 and August 1981.

food stamp participants fell more rapidly under the pressure of price inflation and worsening economic conditions than did average income in the country as a whole.

The decline in the average real gross income of food stamp households also partly reflects attempts to target program benefits on those in greatest need. The food stamp income limits, for example, were tightened in July 1980, eliminating the eligibility of some households with relatively high income. While the circumstances of some individual households improved over this period, enabling them to leave the program, the average food stamp household in August 1981 was relatively poorer than the average household in November 1979.

A comparison of the distribution of real gross income is shown in table 11. The percentage of households with no reported income remained fairly stable at about 7 percent. The median real gross income per household, however, fell from \$281 to \$255, a change of 9 percent. Table 12 presents the distribution of households with respect to the official poverty guidelines. Because the poverty line varies by household size and is adjusted each year to reflect changes in the cost of living, this standard also provides a measure of real changes in income. Again, the picture is one of declining income: the percentage of households with gross income less than or equal to half the poverty line increased from 22 to 32 percent, while the percentage of households above the poverty line fell from 18 to 10 percent.<sup>16</sup>

All food stamp households were not equally affected by inflation, however. Table 13 displays the change in average nominal and real income from the four most frequent sources of income among food stamp households: AFDC (available to 40 percent of all food stamp households in August 1981), Social Security (present in 19 percent of all households), Supplemental Security Income (present in 19 percent of all households), and wages and salaries (present

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<sup>16</sup> Part of this change is due to the reduction in the food stamp income limits effective July 1980. Also, recall that the proportion of poor food stamp households depends in part on the number of months between the survey month and the most recent adjustment to the poverty lines (see footnote 9). If all other things were equal, the November 1979 survey would show a smaller number of poor households than the August 1981 survey.

Table 11--Distribution of Participating Food Stamp Households by Real Gross Monthly Income, November 1979 and August 1981

Value of real gross income	Percent of all households	
	November 1979	August 1981
None	6.9	7.3
\$ 1 - 249	36.3	41.7
250 - 499	41.4	39.3
500 - 749	12.6	9.5
750 - 999	2.6	1.8
1000+	0.2	0.4
<hr/>		
Number of households (in thousands)	6,427	7,698
Median income	\$281	\$255

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup> Real gross income adjusted by change in CPI for all items between November 1979 and August 1981.

Table 12--Comparison of Poverty Status of Participating  
Households, November 1979 and August 1981

(Percent of all households)

Gross income as a percentage of poverty	November 1979	August 1981
50% or less	21.5	31.6
51 - 100%	60.7	58.2
101 - 150%	16.9	10.0
151% or more	0.9	0.3
Number of households (in thousands)	6,427	7,698

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

Table 13--Average Nominal and Real Monthly Income From Selected Sources  
November 1979 and August 1981

Source of income	November 1979	August 1981		Percentage Change	
		Nominal	Real <sup>a</sup>	Nominal	Real <sup>a</sup>
Wages and salaries	\$432	\$500	\$411	+15.7%	-4.9%
AFDC	273	309	254	+13.2	-7.0
Social Security	226	282	232	+24.8	+2.7
SSI	141	181	149	+28.4	+5.7

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup> Real income adjusted by change in CPI for all items between November 1979 and August 1981.

in 16 percent of all households).<sup>17</sup> Automatic cost-of-living adjustments to Social Security and SSI payments protected the purchasing power of many elderly and disabled food stamp participants: the real value of Social Security and SSI benefits among food stamp households increased by slightly less than 3 percent and nearly 6 percent, respectively. As noted in chapter 3, approximately 88 percent of the food stamp households with elderly members received either Social Security or SSI. In contrast, AFDC benefits were set by the States and were not generally indexed: adjustments were on an irregular and ad hoc basis. As a result, the average AFDC payment to food stamp households declined 7 percent in real terms. Similarly, the real value of wages and salaries fell about 5 percent.

Despite the nominal increase in gross income, average net income--after subtracting allowable deductions--did not change between November 1979 and August 1981 (see table 10). The stability of nominal net income indicates that the value of deductions claimed by food stamp households increased more rapidly than nominal gross income. At least part of the growth in deductions, described in more detail in the following section, was due to periodic cost-of-living adjustments to the standard deduction and to the ceiling on the combined value of the dependent care and excess shelter deductions.

Given the stability of nominal net income and rising prices, real net income fell even faster than real gross income. The distribution of households by the real value of net income (table 14) illustrates this downward shift. Median net income in November 1979 was \$167. By August 1981, the median had fallen 21 percent to \$132.

#### CHANGES IN DEDUCTIONS

It was noted in the previous section that the average net income of food stamp households did not change between November 1979 and August 1981 despite a moderate increase in nominal gross income. The \$35 increase in average gross income was offset by a commensurate increase in the value of the deductions claimed by food stamp participants. In real terms,

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<sup>17</sup> As noted in chapter 3, 20 percent of all food stamp households reported earned income of all types including, in addition to wages and salaries, self-employment earnings and farm income.

Table 14--Distribution of Participating Food Stamp Households  
by Real Net Monthly Income, November 1979 and August 1981

Value of real net monthly income	Percent of all households	
	November 1979	August 1981
None	12.6	18.7
\$ 1 - 249	55.0	57.6
250 - 499	27.2	19.8
500 - 749	4.8	3.2
750 - 999	0.4	0.7
1000+	---	*
Number of households (in thousands)	6,427	7,698
Median income	\$167	\$132

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.  
November 1979 Survey of Food Stamp Household  
Characteristics.

<sup>a</sup> Real net income adjusted by change in CPI for all items  
between 1979 and August 1981.

\* Less than 0.05 percent.

the average deduction used to compute food stamp benefits increased by about 7 percent.<sup>18</sup>

As table 15 shows, the percentage of food stamp households that claimed each deduction remained fairly stable over the period following implementation of the Food Stamp Act of 1977. The most frequently used deduction--with the exception of the standard available to every household--was the excess shelter deduction, claimed by about two-thirds of the participating households. The value of the shelter deduction, averaged over those households that claimed it, increased about 45 percent, from \$62 to \$90 per month. The earned income deduction was claimed by one-fifth of all food stamp households, but its average value actually fell 9 percent, reflecting a drop in average earnings. Both the dependent care and the medical deduction resulted in substantial deductions when they were claimed--an average of \$87 and \$51 per month, respectively, in August 1981. But because so few households claimed these particular deductions, they did not have much impact on the overall level of deductions. Given the frequency with which the standard and shelter deductions were claimed, it is useful to look at the reasons for their growth in some detail.

The standard deduction was adjusted twice (in January 1980 and again in January 1981) to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all items other than food. The value of the standard deduction in the 48 States and the District of Columbia increased from \$70 to \$85 per month as a result of these adjustments. This 21-percent increase is actually slightly less than the 23-percent change in the CPI over the same period.

In contrast, the average value of the excess shelter deduction rose 45 percent among those households that claimed it. This rate is considerably faster than the growth in various indexes of shelter costs. The CPI for housing rose by 24 percent between November 1979 and August 1981. The residential rent and the fuel and other utilities components of this index

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<sup>18</sup> It is important to recall the distinction between the deduction to which a household was entitled and the deduction actually used (or claimed) to compute food stamp benefits (see footnote 10). The average amount households could actually claim, given their gross income, rose from \$118 in November 1979 to \$153 in August 1981, an increase of \$35. The average deduction to which they were entitled, however, rose from \$132 to \$169, an increase of \$37 (or about 5 percent after accounting for the effects of inflation).



Table 15--Frequency and Value of Deductions From Gross Income,  
November 1979 and August 1981

Type of deduction	Percent of households With deduction		Average value of deduction		Percent Change
	November 1979	August 1981	November 1979	August 1981	
Standard	100%	100%	\$70	\$85	+21.4
Earned income	20	20	100	91	- 9.0
Dependent care	2	2	71	87	+22.5
Excess shelter	64	70	63	90	+45.5
Medical	<u>a/</u>	2	<u>a/</u>	51	<u>a/</u>
Total deduction <sup>b</sup>					
Excluding standard	74	78	62	84	+35.5
Including standard	100	100	132	169	+28.0
Number of households (in thousands)	6,427	7,698			

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample. November 1979 Survey of Food Stamp Household Characteristics.

<sup>a</sup> Medical deduction for elderly and disabled was not introduced until January 1980.

<sup>b</sup> Average total deduction to which households were entitled. The average deduction actually claimed was \$118 in November 1979 and \$153 in August 1981.

rose by 15 percent and 30 percent, respectively, over the same period.

This apparent discrepancy can be resolved by considering three factors that influenced the growth of the average shelter deduction:<sup>19</sup>

- o Increased shelter costs: Average shelter costs among households with a shelter deduction rose 22 percent, from \$191 in November 1979 to \$234 in August 1981.
- o Increased ceiling (or cap) on the combined value of the dependent care and excess shelter deductions: The shelter cap was increased by 28 percent in January 1981--from \$90 to \$115 per month--to reflect changes in the shelter, fuel, and utilities components of the CPI for housing costs.
- o Exemption of households with elderly or disabled members from the shelter cap beginning in January 1980: This exemption enabled these households to deduct all shelter expenses greater than 50 percent of their adjusted income. Six percent of all food stamp households in August 1981 used this exemption to claim a shelter deduction above the cap.

Given the way in which the shelter deduction was computed, the average deduction should have grown--and eventually approached the shelter cap--as average shelter expenses grew. If left unchanged, the shelter cap would have restricted the size of this increase. By increasing the ceiling and by exempting some households from its limitations, this restriction was reduced or eliminated, thus permitting additional increases in the average shelter deduction.

As table 16 shows, the amount of the increase in allowable shelter deduction depended heavily on whether or not the household was affected by the shelter cap. Moreover, the cause of the increased deduction also differed among the groups identified in the table. For households with a shelter deduction below the allowable ceiling, it was the increase in actual shelter costs that largely determined the increase in the average shelter deduction (except for those households that moved up to the cap). The average shelter deduction among

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<sup>19</sup> Technically, changes in gross income and in the other deductions could also have affected the average shelter deduction. These interactions are not discussed here for the sake of simplicity.

Table 16--Change in Average Shelter Costs and Deductions Between November 1979 and August 1981  
for Households With a Shelter Deduction

Value of combined dependent care/excess shelter deduction	Percentage of all households		Change in average shelter cost		Change in average shelter deduction		Percentage of shelter cost allowed for deduction	
	November 1979	August 1981	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent	November 1979	August 1981
Less than cap	64.1%	55.2%	\$14.84	+ 9.5%	\$12.05	+25.7%	29.9%	34.3%
Equal to cap	35.9	36.1	54.85	+21.7	23.58	26.5	25.2	36.6
Greater than cap <sup>a</sup>	--	8.6	97.68	+43.3	107.20	119.1	39.9	61.0
Number of households with shelter deduction (in thousands)	4,128	5,358	42.57	+22.3	28.24	+45.5	32.4	38.6

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample. November 1979 Survey of Food Stamp Household Characteristics.

<sup>a</sup> The change in average shelter costs and deductions for this group is based on a comparison of households with elderly or disabled members and a shelter deduction equal to the cap in November 1979 and similar households with a shelter deduction greater than the cap in August 1981.

these households in August 1981 was about \$12 higher than the average for comparable households in November 1979. As expected, this increase was similar to the \$15 increase in average shelter costs over this period.

For households whose excess shelter costs were greater than the limit on the dependent care and shelter deductions, and that therefore deducted only a portion of their excess shelter costs, it was the increase in the shelter cap that controlled the increase in the shelter deduction claimed (except for those households that fell below the new cap). The average shelter deduction among these households in August 1981 was about \$24 higher than the average deduction in November 1979, virtually identical to the \$25 increase in the shelter cap. Average shelter costs among these households, however, increased by nearly \$55, only part of which was permitted as a deduction because of the cap. Thus, for these households, the shelter cap was an effective restraint on the growth of the shelter deduction over this period.

For the elderly or disabled households that were exempted from the limit on the dependent care and excess shelter deductions, both removal of the ceiling and increases in actual shelter costs increased the average shelter deduction. As table 16 shows, actual shelter costs increased much more for these households than for the other groups, by an average \$97 per month over the period. The rise in the average shelter deduction claimed by elderly or disabled households (\$107 per month) fully reflected this cost increase, as well as the initial effect of removing the shelter cap for such households in 1980. As table 16 also shows, the average shelter deduction grew more than four times faster for these households than for any other group. This rapid growth was primarily responsible for the large apparent increase in the overall average shelter deduction among all food stamp households.

In summary, the apparently rapid increase in the average shelter deduction is misleading. Increases in the average deduction for most households generally kept pace with rising shelter costs. The ceiling on the combined dependent care and excess shelter deductions did in fact moderate this growth for a substantial number of households. But for those elderly or disabled households with relatively high shelter costs, the special exemption from the combined ceiling was a major benefit. The relatively rapid increase in the overall average shelter deduction primarily reflected the substantial growth in the deduction claimed by these households.

## CHANGES IN BENEFITS

Over the period from November 1979 to August 1981, the average monthly food stamp benefit increased considerably, from \$82 to \$103 per household. This overall increase in the average benefit was caused by two distinct types of changes: regular adjustments of nominal food stamp benefits and shifts in the economic circumstances of food stamp households.

The first type of change was the periodic updating of coupon allotment levels to match increases in the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan. The maximum allotment for a family of four increased from \$204 in November 1979 to \$233 in August 1981. Over the long run, these adjustments maintain the real value or purchasing power of the food stamp allotment for households with constant real economic circumstances.

The second type of change included anything that affected those economic circumstances, particularly the average net income, of participating households. In general, three different kinds of change can result in a lower average net income, and consequently higher average benefit, for the food stamp caseload. First, the composition of the caseload can shift over time to a relatively poorer group of households. Second, the gross income of continuing food stamp households may decline over time, with a corresponding decline in net income and increase in benefit. Finally, the average level of deductions claimed by participating households may increase, so that net income may decline even more than gross income, and again benefits increase. In fact, all of these forces for change were at work over this period, and to some extent their separate effects on the increasing level of average food stamp benefits can be distinguished.<sup>20</sup>

Table 17 shows the change in the distribution of food stamp benefits that occurred between November 1979 and August 1981. Even after accounting for the effect of food price inflation, the distribution of

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<sup>20</sup> It is important to note that the various trends that caused the average level of benefits for the food stamp caseload to rise over the period were complex, and consequently cannot be altogether distinguished with the available data. This is an inherent limitation of cross-sectional surveys when used to trace complex trends through time. Only a longitudinal panel survey, following the same group of households for some time, can give adequate information on the detailed interactions among the various trends.

Table 17--Distribution of Participating Households by Amount of Monthly Food Stamp Benefit, November 1979 and August 1981

Average monthly food stamp benefit	Nominal benefits		Real benefits <sup>a</sup>	
	November 1979	August 1981	November 1979	August 1981
\$50 or less	36%	25%	38%	30%
51 to 100	31	31	32	36
101 to 150	18	21	17	23
151 to 200	9	13	9	7
201 or more	6	10	4	4
Number of households (in thousands)	6,427	7,698		
Median benefit	\$66	\$87	\$62	\$71

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.  
November 1979 Survey of Food Stamp Household  
Characteristics.

<sup>a</sup> Real benefit adjusted by change in CPI for food at home  
since January 1979.

real benefits still shifted upward.<sup>21</sup> In these real terms, the median household benefit rose from \$62 to \$71 over the period.

A different kind of picture is available from reported figures on monthly Food Stamp Program participation and average benefits. Figure 5 shows the average monthly benefit per person, in both nominal and real terms, over the 36-month period from 1979 through 1981. This figure provides a graphic illustration of the cyclical pattern in average monthly food stamp benefits--characterized by sharp upward jumps with each cost-of-living adjustment followed by a gradual decline until the next adjustment--as well as the longer run increasing trend in both nominal and real average benefits. Roughly speaking, the longer run trend can be observed by comparing benefit levels in the periodic update months (January of each year and July of 1979).<sup>22</sup> Table 18 compares the estimated long-run growth in average benefits over the 4-year period before implementation of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 and the more recent 3-year period since its implementation. The recent 8 percent annual growth of real average benefits contrasts with virtually no long-run growth during the earlier period.

Several factors that influenced the recent growth in average food stamp benefits are summarized in table 19.<sup>23</sup> For the particular period between

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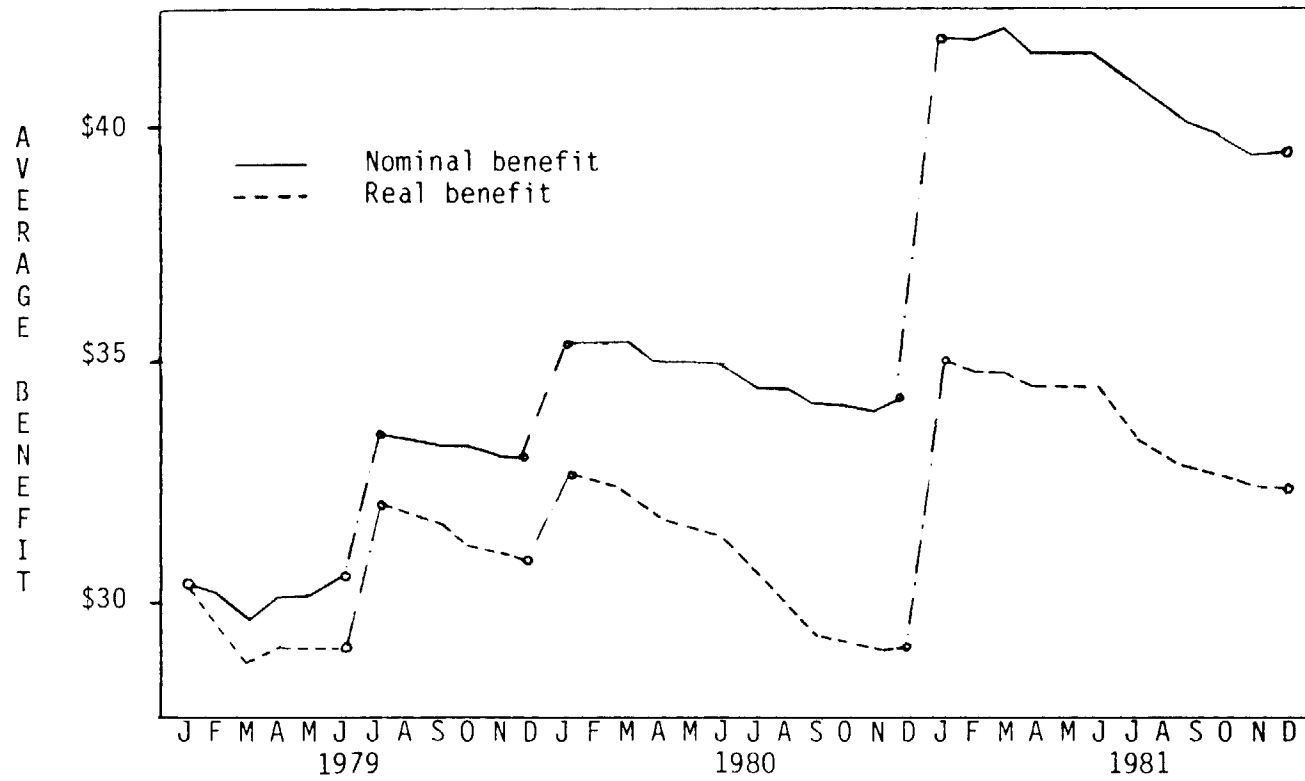
<sup>21</sup> Throughout this section, real benefits have been adjusted to constant January 1979 dollars using the CPI for food at home unless otherwise noted.

<sup>22</sup> For a more detailed treatment of the separation of the long-run trend from the cyclic element in food stamp benefit levels, see Thomas M. Fraker, An Analysis of the Change in the Average Per Capita Food Stamp Benefit Between September 1975 and August 1980, Mathematica Policy Research, May 17, 1982.

<sup>23</sup> Two other possible explanations, changes in the benefit reduction rate and the household size distribution, are excluded from this discussion. The benefit reduction rate was not altered after implementation of the Food Stamp Act of 1977. Similarly, the estimated average household size was the same in both the November 1979 and August 1981 surveys. While there was a slight shift in the distribution of household size, its effect on the average scaling factor used to adjust the Thrifty Food Plan to different household sizes was

FIGURE 5

AVERAGE FOOD STAMP BENEFIT PER PERSON: 1979-81



Source: Food Stamp Program Statistical Summary of Operations.

Note: Real value of food stamp benefits adjusted by change in CPI for Food at Home since January 1979.



Table 18--Comparison of Annual Growth Rates Before and After  
Implementation of the Food Stamp Act of 1977

	Average annual growth rates	
	1975-78	1979-81
CPI for food at home	8.4%	7.7%
Nominal benefit per person	8.5	15.5
Real benefit per person <sup>a</sup>	0.2	7.8

Source: Computed by Food and Nutrition Service from data in Food Stamp Program Statistical Summary of Operations.

<sup>a</sup> Real benefit per person adjusted by changes in CPI for food at home.

Table 19--Sources of Change in Average Food Stamp Benefits,  
November 1979 and August 1981

	Nominal values			Real values		
	November 1979	August 1981	Percentage change	November 1979	August 1981	Percentage change
Average gross income	\$314	\$349	+11.1	\$314	\$302	- 3.8
Average total deduction	\$132	\$169	+28.0	\$132	\$146	+10.6
Average net income	\$196	\$196	-0-	\$196	\$170	+13.3
Average household benefit	\$82	\$103	+25.6	\$ 82	\$ 89	+8.7
Maximum coupon allotment (for family of four)	\$204	\$233	+14.2	\$204	\$202	-1.0
Consumer Price Index						
All items	227.5	276.5	+21.5			
All items less food	224.1	274.9	+22.7			
Food at home	236.0	272.8	+15.6			

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample. November 1979 Survey of Food Stamp Household Characteristics.

<sup>a</sup> Real values are adjusted by changes in CPI for food at home between November 1979 and August 1981.

November 1979 and August 1981, the maximum coupon allotment for a family of four increased somewhat less than the CPI for food at home (14 percent compared to 16 percent). In itself, this incomplete indexing for inflation somewhat diminished the growth in average benefits. The major sources of increased average benefits can be seen in the relatively small increase in the average gross income of food stamp households (at approximately one-half the rate of general inflation: 11 percent versus 22 percent) and the relatively large increase in the average level of deductions claimed (28 percent). Both of these changes contributed to the absence of any growth over the period in the average net income of food stamp households.

Table 19 also presents the comparable figures adjusted by the change in the CPI for food at home between November 1979 and August 1981.<sup>24</sup> It shows a substantial decline in the average real gross income of food stamp households (down 4 percent), an increase in the average real value of total deductions claimed (up 11 percent), and a still more substantial decline in average real net income (down 13 percent). The result of these changes is reflected in the increasing real value of the average food stamp benefit received by participating households (a rise of 9 percent). This contrasts with the slight decline in real terms in the maximum coupon allotment over this particular period (down 1 percent for a family of four).

The results of another way of determining the relative importance of these changes in gross income and deductions on real benefit levels for the periods just before and just after implementation of the Food

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too small (about 1 percent) to warrant further discussion.

<sup>24</sup> The CPI for food at home is simply a yardstick against which the percentage change in average income and deductions are compared to indicate their effects on real benefits. If the average household allotment, gross income, and deduction all change at the same rate as this component of the CPI, then the real average benefit per household will remain unchanged, all other things being equal. There is, however, no reason to expect income and deductions to increase proportionally with this price index.

Stamp Act of 1977 are shown in table 20.<sup>25</sup> In both periods, the observed decline in the average real gross income of food stamp households resulted in increased real food stamp benefits, adding about 30 cents to the real average monthly benefit per person over the course of a year.

In contrast, the effect of increasing average deductions differed sharply between the two periods. Under the 1964 law, with most itemized deductions used by relatively few participants, the effect of changes in the real value of deductions was to lower the real monthly benefit per person by an average of 7 cents over the course of a year. Under the 1977 law, with a uniform standard deduction and growing use of the shelter deduction, the annual growth in the real value of total deductions resulted in an estimated 38-cent increase in the average real monthly benefit per person over the course of a year.

These particular estimates depend on the specific time periods compared, but the general comparison is instructive. In the earlier period, the slight growth that did occur in average real benefits was primarily associated with the declining average real gross income of food stamp households. In the latter

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<sup>25</sup> A detailed description of the methodology used to compute these effects is found in An Analysis of Change in the Average Per Capita Food Stamp Benefit between September 1975 and August 1980 cited above. Briefly, the equation for determining individual household benefits was aggregated and converted to an average per capita basis. Differentiation of this equation expresses the change in the average monthly per capita food stamp benefit as the sum of products of changes in the explanatory variables in the benefit equation and their coefficients. Periodic surveys of the characteristics of food stamp households were used to compute the values of the coefficients and to determine the changes that occurred in the explanatory variables. By multiplying known changes in each explanatory variable by the computed value of its coefficient, that variable's contribution to the change in the average monthly per capita benefit was estimated. Similarly, substituting the estimated change in an explanatory variable necessary to keep pace with food price inflation provided an estimate of what monthly per capita benefits would have been, all else being equal. The difference between this estimate and the observed value, adjusted for the different number of months in each observation period, is shown in table 21.

Table 20--Estimated Annual Impact on Average Food Stamp Benefits  
Per Person Due to Changes in Gross Income and Deductions

	Estimated change in nominal benefit		Estimated change in real benefit <sup>c</sup>	
	1964 Act <sup>a</sup>	1977 Act <sup>b</sup>	1964 Act <sup>a</sup>	1977 Act <sup>b</sup>
Due to changes in gross income	+\$0.68	+\$0.88	+\$0.33	+\$0.32
Due to changes in total deductions	- 0.14	+ 1.05	- 0.07	+ 0.38

Source: Computed by Food and Nutrition Service from September 1975,  
February 1978, November 1979, and August 1981 survey data.

<sup>a</sup> Based on 29-month period from September 1975 to February 1978.

<sup>b</sup> Based on 21-month period from November 1979 to August 1981.

<sup>c</sup> Based on constant 1967 dollars, adjusted by CPI for food at home.

period, increasing average real benefits were caused about equally by declining average gross income and growing average deductions.

#### CHANGES IN CASELOAD COMPOSITION

With implementation of the Food Stamp Act of 1977, the size and composition of the food stamp caseload changed markedly. An estimated 4.0 to 5.2 million new participants joined the program, while some 500,000 to 700,000 participants became ineligible. On balance, households entering the program during the first half of 1979 were poorer, more elderly, and more southern than previous participants.

From late 1979 through 1981, by contrast, the basic character of the food stamp population remained essentially stable. As indicated in table 21, the distribution of the caseload among the major target groups identified in chapter 3 shifted only slightly over this period.

#### Women With Children

The number of households with female household heads and dependent children increased from 2.6 million to 3.3 million between November 1979 and August 1981, a 27-percent increase. Since this increase was faster than the overall growth in the program, the proportion of such households in the food stamp caseload increased from 41 to 43 percent. This differs from the pattern seen immediately after the implementation of the Food Stamp Act of 1977. Between November 1978 and November 1979, the increase among food stamp participants with public assistance was far less than the increase among those without public assistance.<sup>26</sup> By way of comparison, the number of AFDC recipients rose 8 percent between 1979 and 1981. The number persons in households below the poverty line with a female head and children present grew nearly 24 percent between 1979 and 1981.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See Effects of the 1977 Food Stamp Act: Second Annual Report to the Congress, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, January 1981. Public assistance included General Assistance payments in some States in addition to AFDC. While more refined data are not available, most recipients of AFDC were females with dependent children.

<sup>27</sup> A small part of the increase between 1980 and 1981 was due to several changes in the poverty definition used in the Current Population Survey. See U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-60, No. 134, Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States: 1981 (Advance Data from the March 1982 Current Population Survey), Washington, D.C., 1982.

Table 21--Changes in Food Stamp Caseload Composition,  
November 1979 and August 1981

(Numbers in thousands)

Major household type	Distribution of households				Percentage Change in number of households
	November 1979		August 1981		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Families with female head and dependent children	2,610	40.6	3,320	43.1	+27.2
Households with earners	1,304	20.3	1,513	19.7	+16.0
Households with elderly	1,554	24.2	1,611	20.9	+ 3.7
All households	6,427		7,698		+19.8

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample. November 1979 Survey of Food Stamp Household characteristics.

<sup>a</sup> Columns do not add to total because some food stamp households belong to more than one or to none of the categories included in the table.

#### Households With Elderly

There were approximately 1.6 million elderly households in both November 1979 and August 1981. Given the overall growth in the program, however, the proportion of elderly households dropped from 24 to 21 percent. Again, this is a reversal of the pattern observed just before and after the implementation of the Food Stamp Act of 1977. Between November 1978 and November 1979, the number of food stamp participants age 65 or older increased by 42 percent. The same age group grew only 4 percent in the subsequent period.

The rapid response to the new law was partly explained by the historically low rate of participation among eligible elderly households before the elimination of the purchase requirement. Because a larger fraction of the elderly were eligible but chose not to participate, there was greater potential for growth. After the initial surge in participation due to these legislative changes, however, general trends in the elderly population should take precedence. The relative stability in the number of elderly participants during this period is consistent with two other measures of these trends. First, the number of elderly persons receiving SSI benefits dropped about 10 percent from December 1979 to December 1981. Second, the number of persons age 65 or over in poverty grew less than 5 percent, while the number of all persons in poverty grew 22 percent.

#### Households With Earnings

The number of food stamp households with earned income grew about 16 percent, from 1.3 million households in November 1979 to 1.5 million in August 1981. Thus, the proportion of such "working poor" households remained virtually constant at 20 percent. This continues the pattern seen in every survey of food stamp households since September 1976: about one out of every five households has at least one worker.



## CHAPTER 4: DETAILED TABLES FOR THE 50 STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

In the pages that follow, detailed tabulations of the characteristics of food stamp households and participants are presented. These tables are roughly ordered to provide information on the following topics:

- o Average amounts and sources of income, both gross and net.
- o Frequency and average amount of deductions from gross income.
- o Average amount of monthly food stamp benefits.
- o Average amount of countable resources.
- o Age, race, and sex of food stamp participants.
- o Employment and work registration status of food stamp participants and household heads.
- o Summary statistics for households with earned income, with elderly members, with disabled members, with children, and with school-age children.
- o Summary comparisons of survey results in November 1979, August 1980, and August 1981.

The reference population for each table, unless otherwise noted, is the food stamp caseload in the 50 States and the District of Columbia in August 1981.

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Table 1  
AGGREGATE AUGUST 1981 PARTICIPATION TOTALS

Area	Number of Households (000)	Number of People (000)	Value of Benefits (000)
United States	7,697	20,362	\$818,024
Continental U.S.	7,648	20,234	810,477
Alaska, Hawaii	49	128	7,547
Outlying Areas	524	1,892	78,381
Puerto Rico	510	1,832	75,009
Guam, Virgin Islands	14	60	3,371
Total	8,221	22,254	\$896,405

Source: Food Stamp Program Statistical Summary of Operations, August 1981.

Table 2

AVERAGE VALUES OF SELECTED NATIONAL CASELOAD  
CHARACTERISTICS WITH AND WITHOUT PUERTO RICO,  
GUAM, AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

	Excluding Outlying Areas	Including Outlying Areas
Gross Monthly Income	\$349	\$342
Net Monthly Income	\$196	\$194
Total Deduction <sup>a</sup>	\$169	\$164
Countable Resources	\$ 62	\$ 63
Monthly Benefit	\$103	\$107
Household Size	2.7	2.8
Certification Period	7.8	7.7

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Includes earned income, dependent care, excess shelter, medical, and standard deduction. Value of standard deduction and limit on combined dependent care/excess shelter deduction varies by area (See Appendix D).

Table 3

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH SELECTED  
CHARACTERISTICS IN NATIONAL CASELOAD WITH AND  
WITHOUT PUERTO RICO, GUAM, AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

	Excluding Number of Households (000)	Outlying Areas Percent of All Households	Including Number of Households (000)	Outlying Areas Percent of All Households
Zero Gross Income	561	7.3%	632	7.7%
Zero Net Income	1,443	18.7	1,581	19.2
Minimum Benefit <sup>a</sup>	434	5.6	437	5.3
Elderly <sup>b</sup>	1,611	20.9	1,771	21.5
Children <sup>c</sup>	4,345	56.4	4,732	57.6
School Age Children <sup>d</sup>	3,192	41.5	3,528	42.9
Disabled <sup>e</sup>	609	7.9	609	7.4

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Minimum benefit is \$10 for one and two person households.

<sup>b</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more.

<sup>c</sup>Households with at least one member age 17 or less.

<sup>d</sup>Households with at least one member age 5 to 17.

<sup>e</sup>Households with SSI income and no member age 60 or more.



Table 4

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY GROSS AND NET  
MONTHLY INCOME

Amount of Monthly Income	Gross Income		Net Income	
	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
None	561	7.3%	1,443	18.7%
\$ 1- 99	251	3.3	1,380	17.9
100-199	892	11.6	1,799	23.4
200-299	1,911	24.8	1,232	16.0
300-399	1,590	20.7	820	10.7
400-499	876	11.4	444	5.8
500-599	656	8.5	258	3.3
600-699	384	5.0	147	1.9
700-799	240	3.1	82	1.1
800-899	157	2.0	37	0.5
900-999	76	1.0	34	0.4
1000 +	103	1.3	22	0.3
Total	7,698	100.0	7,698	100.0
Average Income	\$349		\$196	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

Table 5  
DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY GROSS MONTHLY INCOME  
AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Gross Monthly Income	Household Size								Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+		
None	301	98	69	56	20	10	7	0	561	7.3%
\$ 1- 99	132	70	29	11	6	2	*	1	251	3.3
100-199	402	195	164	70	33	20	6	2	892	11.6
200-299	1,076	466	204	88	40	18	12	6	1,911	24.8
300-399	501	403	378	219	61	20	3	3	1,590	20.7
400-499	63	329	179	171	78	41	6	10	876	11.4
500-599	27	110	223	149	62	56	16	14	656	8.5
600-699	*	36	92	111	88	31	16	10	384	5.0
700-799	0	13	40	66	46	50	13	12	240	3.1
800-899	0	1	18	42	43	24	18	11	157	2.0
900-999	0	0	1	9	27	15	4	20	76	1.0
1000 +	0	*	1	4	7	13	24	54	103	1.3
Number of Households	2,502	1,722	1,398	996	512	302	124	143	7,698	100.0
Percent of All Households	32.5	22.4	18.2	12.9	6.7	3.9	1.6	1.8	100.0	
Average Gross Income	\$225	306	368	437	521	567	672	871	\$349	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

\*Less than 500 households.

Table 6

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY NET MONTHLY INCOME  
AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Net Monthly Income	Household Size								Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+		
None	760	267	213	118	46	25	12	3	1,443	18.7%
\$ 1- 99	617	397	184	86	53	27	10	5	1,380	17.9
100-199	780	437	330	181	49	14	5	2	1,799	23.4
200-299	310	333	288	191	67	33	3	7	1,232	16.0
300-399	35	231	226	163	91	58	7	9	820	10.7
400-499	0	56	119	138	63	33	26	9	444	5.8
500-599	0	*	39	92	63	44	6	13	258	3.3
600-699	0	0	0	25	57	35	15	16	147	1.9
700-799	0	0	0	1	24	18	17	23	82	1.1
800-899	0	0	0	0	1	14	4	19	37	0.5
900-999	0	0	0	0	0	1	17	15	34	0.4
1000 +	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	20	22	0.3
Number of Households	2,502	1,722	1,398	996	512	302	124	143	7,698	100.0
Percent of All Households	32.5	22.4	18.2	12.9	6.7	3.9	1.6	1.8	100.0	
Average Net Income	\$94	157	201	266	344	396	508	683	\$196	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

\*Less than 500 households.

Table 7

## DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME SOURCE

Amount of Monthly Income From Specified Source	Earned Income <sup>a</sup>		Social Security & Other Pensions		AFDC or General Assistance		SSI		Other Income	
	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent
None	6,113	79.4%	5,838	75.8%	3,780	49.1%	6,184	80.3%	6,939	90.1%
\$ 1- 99	174	2.3	59	0.8	418	5.4	396	5.1	290	3.8
100-199	196	2.5	431	5.6	915	11.9	335	4.3	162	2.1
200-299	156	2.0	602	7.8	903	11.7	580	7.5	94	1.2
300-399	148	1.9	370	4.8	764	9.9	120	1.6	61	0.8
400-499	152	2.0	176	2.3	431	5.6	15	0.2	28	0.4
500-599	213	2.8	80	1.0	276	3.6	9	0.1	31	0.4
600-699	207	2.7	38	0.5	90	1.2	1	*	3	*
700-799	95	1.2	9	0.1	33	0.4	2	*	1	*
800-899	81	1.1	7	0.1	13	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
900-999	36	0.5	4	0.1	8	0.1	0	0.0	1	*
1000+	56	0.7	0	0.0	4	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Unknown	72	0.9	84	1.1	62	0.8	55	0.7	87	1.1
Number of Households	7,698	100.0	7,698	100.0	7,698	100.0	7,698	100.0	7,698	100.0
Households With Income	1,513	19.7	1,776	23.1	3,855	50.1	1,459	19.0	672	8.7
Average Amount of Income <sup>b</sup>	\$452		290		284		181		165	
Average Gross Income <sup>b</sup>	\$563		376		361		345		391	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Earned income includes wages, salaries, self-employment and farm income.

<sup>b</sup>For households with income from specified source.

\*Less than 0.05 percent.

Table 8

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS, AVERAGE INCOME, AND AVERAGE BENEFIT  
BY SELECTED INCOME SOURCES

Income Source	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households	Average Income Amount <sup>a</sup>		Average Benefit <sup>a</sup>
			Gross	From Source	
<u>Earned Income:</u>					
Wages and salaries	1,203	15.6%	\$601	\$500	\$109
Self-employment	107	1.4	395	273	145
Other earned income	83	1.1	453	107	108
<u>Unearned Income:</u>					
Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)	3,055	39.7	389	309	135
General Assistance (GA)	587	7.6	218	170	82
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	1,459	19.0	345	181	55
Social Security	1,471	19.1	367	282	53
Other retirement benefits	67	0.9	392	296	63
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	77	1.0	515	376	112
Workmen's Compensation	12	0.2	419	266	133
Veterans Administration	54	0.7	389	148	58
<u>No income:</u>	561	7.3	0		126
Total <sup>b</sup>	7,698	100.0	349		103

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Averaged over households with income from specified source.

<sup>b</sup>Sum of individual income sources do not add to totals because households can receive income from more than one source.

Table 9

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY GROSS MONTHLY INCOME  
AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE POVERTY LINE FOR ALL HOUSEHOLDS,  
HOUSEHOLDS WITH ELDERLY OR DISABLED, AND  
HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN

Gross Income as a Percentage of the Poverty Line <sup>a</sup>	All Households		Households With Elderly <sup>b</sup>		Households With Elderly or Disabled <sup>c</sup>		Households With Children <sup>d</sup>	
	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent
25% or less	1,006	13.1%	46	2.8%	47	2.1%	509	11.7%
26 - 50%	1,422	18.5	74	4.6	129	5.8	1,015	23.4
51 - 75%	2,475	32.1	500	31.0	768	34.6	1,557	35.8
76 - 100%	2,008	26.1	798	49.6	1,042	47.0	809	18.6
101 - 125%	637	8.3	178	11.0	218	9.8	360	8.3
126 - 130%	43	0.6	4	0.3	5	0.2	34	0.8
131 - 150%	82	1.1	7	0.4	8	0.3	50	1.1
151% or more	24	0.3	4	0.2	4	0.2	11	0.3
Total	7,698	100.0	1,611	100.0	2,220	100.0	4,345	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Defined as the Office of Management and Budget's 1981 poverty income guidelines for nonfarm families (see Appendix B).

<sup>b</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more.

<sup>c</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more or with SSI income and no member age 60 or more.

<sup>d</sup>Households with at least one member age 17 or less.

Table 10

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY NET MONTHLY INCOME  
AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE POVERTY LINE FOR ALL HOUSEHOLDS,  
HOUSEHOLDS WITH ELDERLY OR DISABLED, AND  
HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN

Net Income As a Percentage of the Poverty Line <sup>a</sup>	All Households		Households With Elderly <sup>b</sup>		Households With Elderly or Disabled <sup>c</sup>		Households With Children <sup>d</sup>	
	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent
25% or less	3,259	42.3%	412	25.6%	592	26.7%	1,719	39.6%
26 - 50%	2,288	29.7	560	34.7	778	35.0	1,452	33.4
51 - 75%	1,665	21.6	520	32.3	684	30.8	888	20.4
76 - 100%	483	6.3	119	7.4	167	7.5	285	6.6
101 - 125%	1	*	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	*
126 - 130%	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
131 - 150%	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
151% or more	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	7,698	100.0	1,611	100.0	2,220	100.0	4,345	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Defined as the Office of Management and Budget's 1980 poverty income guidelines for nonfarm families (see Appendix B).

<sup>b</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more.

<sup>c</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more or with SSI income and no member age 60 or more.

<sup>d</sup>Households with at least one member age 17 or less.

\*Less than 0.05 percent.

Table 11  
NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS CLAIMING AND VALUE OF  
DEDUCTION CLAIMED

Type of Deduction	Number of Households Claiming Deduction (000)	Percent of All Households	Average Amount of Deduction	
			Over Claiming Households	Over All Households
Earned Income	1,513	19.7%	\$ 91	\$ 18
Dependent Care <sup>a</sup>	176	2.3	87	2
Shelter <sup>a</sup>	5,358	69.6	90	63
Medical <sup>b</sup>	168	2.2	51	1
Total <sup>c</sup>	7,698	100.0	169	169

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Combined total of dependent care deduction and shelter deduction is subject to a limit except for households where at least one member is age 60 or more or receiving SSI or Social Security disability payments (see Appendix D).

<sup>b</sup>Available only to households where at least one person is age 60 or more or receiving SSI or Social Security disability payments.

<sup>c</sup>Includes standard deduction for all households (see Appendix D).



Table 12  
DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY AMOUNT  
OF TOTAL DEDUCTION

Amount of Total Deduction <sup>a</sup>	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
\$ 0 - 50	0	0.0%
51 - 100	1,914	24.9
101 - 150	1,340	17.4
151 - 200	2,904	37.7
201 - 250	649	8.4
251 - 300	457	5.9
300+	435	5.6
Total	7,698	100.0
Average Deduction for Claiming Households	\$169	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Includes earned income, dependent care, excess shelter, medical, and standard deduction (see Appendix D).

Table 13

AVERAGE TOTAL DEDUCTION<sup>a</sup> FOR ALL HOUSEHOLDS BY  
GROSS MONTHLY INCOME AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Gross Monthly Income	Household Size								Average Total Deduction
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
None	\$122	127	152	150	151	118	120	0	\$130
\$ 1- 99	146	132	139	182	167	157	*	200	144
100-199	162	150	163	174	163	197	192	166	162
200-299	151	161	165	163	176	172	193	169	157
300-399	173	160	166	167	184	175	200	168	168
400-499	188	157	165	173	151	169	168	143	164
500-599	264	203	193	174	173	171	125	133	187
600-699	*	278	251	194	183	182	175	140	210
700-799	0	302	267	238	206	157	110	144	212
800-899	0	328	324	287	215	194	138	153	231
900-999	0	0	360	322	291	194	204	141	232
1000 +	0	*	488	407	300	287	258	260	273
Average Total Deduction	\$156	162	179	184	186	178	173	189	\$169

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Total deduction includes earned income, dependent care, excess shelter, medical and standard deduction (see Appendix D).

\*Average deduction was not computed for categories with less than 500 households.

Table 14  
NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS CLAIMING EARNED INCOME  
DEDUCTION AND VALUE OF DEDUCTION CLAIMED

Households with:	Number of Households Total	With Deduction	Percent of Households	Average Amount of Deduction With Deduction	All Households
Elderly <sup>a</sup>	1,611	96	6.0%	\$ 56	\$ 3
Children <sup>b</sup>	4,345	1,166	26.8	102	27
Disabled <sup>c</sup>	609	42	6.9	60	4
Earned Income <sup>d</sup>	1,513	1,513	100.0	90	90
Public Assistance <sup>e</sup>	3,855	450	11.7	70	8
Total	7,698	1,513	19.7	91	18

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more.

<sup>b</sup>Households with at least one member age 17 or less.

<sup>c</sup>Households with SSI income and no member age 60 or more.

<sup>d</sup>Earned income includes wages, salaries, self-employment and farm income.

<sup>e</sup>Public assistance includes Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and General Assistance (GA).

Table 15  
DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY AMOUNT  
OF EARNED INCOME DEDUCTION

Amount of Earned Income Deduction	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
None	6,185	80.3%
\$ 1 - 50	445	5.8
51 - 100	383	5.0
101 - 150	478	6.2
151 - 200	154	2.0
201 - 250	40	0.5
251 - 300	13	0.2
300+	0	0.0
Total	7,698	100.0
Average Deduction for Claiming Households	\$ 91	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

Table 16

NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS CLAIMING DEPENDENT CARE<sup>a</sup>  
DEDUCTION AND VALUE OF DEDUCTION CLAIMED

Households with:	Number of Households Total	With Deduction	Percent of Households	Average Amount of Deduction With Deduction	All Households
Elderly <sup>b</sup>	1,611	1	*	\$17	\$ **
Children <sup>c</sup>	4,345	164	3.8%	88	3
Disabled <sup>d</sup>	609	2	0.3	104	**
Earned Income <sup>e</sup>	1,513	167	11.0	88	10
Public Assistance <sup>f</sup>	3,855	60	1.6	83	1
Total	7,698	176	2.3	87	2

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Combined total of dependent care deduction and excess shelter deduction is subject to a limit except for households where at least one member is age 60 or more or receiving SSI or Social Security disability payments (see Appendix D).

<sup>b</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more.

<sup>c</sup>Households with at least one member age 17 or less.

<sup>d</sup>Households with SSI income and no member age 60 or more.

<sup>e</sup>Earned income includes wages, salaries, self-employment and farm income.

<sup>f</sup>Public assistance includes Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and General Assistance (GA).

\*Less than 0.05 percent.

\*\*Less than 50 cents.

Table 17

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY AMOUNT  
OF DEPENDENT CARE DEDUCTION

Amount of Dependent Care Deduction <sup>a</sup>	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
None	7,522	97.7%
\$ 1 - 50	25	0.3
51 - 100	76	1.0
101 - 150	75	1.0
151 - 200	0	0.0
201 - 250	0	0.0
251 - 300	0	0.0
300+	0	0.0
Total	7,698	100.0
Average Deduction for Claiming Households	\$87	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Combined total of dependent care deduction and excess shelter deduction is subject to a limit except for households where at least one member is age 60 or more or receiving SSI or Social Security disability payments (see Appendix D).

Table 18  
NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS CLAIMING EXCESS SHELTER<sup>a</sup>  
DEDUCTION AND VALUE OF DEDUCTION CLAIMED

Households With:	Number of Households Total	With Deduction	Percent of Households	Average Amount of Deduction With Deduction	All Households
Elderly <sup>b</sup>	1,611	1,083	67.2%	\$ 91	\$61
Children <sup>c</sup>	4,345	3,058	70.4	89	63
Disabled <sup>d</sup>	609	416	68.3	115	79
Earned Income <sup>e</sup>	1,513	898	59.4	81	48
Public Assistance <sup>f</sup>	3,855	2,907	75.4	89	67
Total	7,698	5,358	69.6	90	63

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Combined total of dependent care deduction and shelter deduction is subject to a limit except for households where at least one member is age 60 or more or receiving SSI or Social Security disability payments (see Appendix D).

<sup>b</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more.

<sup>c</sup>Households with at least one member age 17 or less.

<sup>d</sup>Households with SSI income and no member age 60 or more.

<sup>e</sup>Earned income includes wages, salaries, self-employment, and farm income.

<sup>f</sup>Public assistance includes Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and General Assistance (GA).

Table 19

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY AMOUNT  
OF EXCESS SHELTER DEDUCTION

Amount of Excess Shelter Deduction <sup>a</sup>	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
None	2,340	30.4%
\$ 1 - 50	1,291	16.8
51 - 100	1,408	18.3
101 - 150	2,332	30.3
151 - 200	149	1.9
201 - 250	81	1.1
251 - 300	40	0.5
300+	57	0.7
Total	7,698	100.0
Average Deduction for Claiming Households	\$90	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Combined total of dependent care deduction and excess shelter deduction is subject to a limit except for households where at least one member is age 60 or more or receiving SSI or Social Security disability payments (see Appendix D).



Table 20

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY VALUE OF  
COMBINED DEPENDENT CARE/EXCESS SHELTER DEDUCTION

Value of Combined Dependent Care/ Excess Shelter Deduction <sup>a</sup>	All Households		Households with Elderly <sup>b</sup>		Households with Children <sup>c</sup>		Households with Disabled <sup>d</sup>		Households with Earned Income <sup>e</sup>		Households with Public Assistance <sup>f</sup>	
	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent
None	2,245	29.2%	528	32.7%	1,200	27.6%	193	31.6%	522	34.5%	910	23.6%
Less than cap	3,005	39.0	785	48.7	1,494	34.4	248	40.8	512	33.8	1,542	40.0
Equal to cap	1,985	25.8	4	0.2	1,567	36.1	0	0.0	462	30.5	1,312	34.0
Greater than cap	463	6.0	295	18.3	84	1.9	168	27.6	18	1.2	91	2.4
Total	7,698	100.0	1,611	100.0	4,345	100.0	609	100.0	1,513	100.0	3,855	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Combined total of dependent care and excess shelter deduction is capped at a level which varies by area (see Appendix D) except for households where at least one member is age 60 or more or receiving SSI or Social Security disability payments.

<sup>b</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more.

<sup>c</sup>Households with at least one member age 17 or less.

<sup>d</sup>Households with SSI income and no member age 60 or more.

<sup>e</sup>Earned income includes wages, salaries, self-employment and farm income.

<sup>f</sup>Public assistance includes Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and General Assistance (GA).

Table 21  
NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS CLAIMING MEDICAL  
DEDUCTION AND VALUE OF DEDUCTION CLAIMED<sup>a</sup>

Households with:	Number of Households		Percent of Households	Average Amount of Deduction	
	Total	With Deduction		With Deduction	All Households
Elderly <sup>b</sup>	1,611	150	9.3%	\$53	\$5
Children <sup>c</sup>	4,345	8	0.2	40	*
Disabled <sup>d</sup>	609	9	1.5	24	*
Earned Income <sup>e</sup>	1,513	10	0.7	36	*
Public Assistance <sup>f</sup>	3,855	6	0.2	81	*
Total	7,698	168	2.2	51	1

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Available only to households where at least one person is age 60 or more or receiving SSI or Social Security disability payments.

<sup>b</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more.

<sup>c</sup>Households with at least one member age 17 or less.

<sup>d</sup>Households with SSI income and no member age 60 or more.

<sup>e</sup>Earned income includes wages, salaries, self-employment and farm income.

<sup>f</sup>Public assistance includes Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and General Assistance (GA).

\*Less than 50 cents.

Table 22  
DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY AMOUNT  
OF MEDICAL DEDUCTION

Amount of Medical Deduction <sup>a</sup>	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
None	7,530	97.8%
\$ 1 - 50	114	1.5
51 - 100	31	0.4
101 - 150	10	0.1
151 - 200	7	0.1
201 - 250	4	0.1
251 - 300	0	0.0
300+	1	*
Total	7,698	100.0
Average Deduction for Claiming Households	\$ 51	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Available only to households where at least one person is age 60 or more or receiving SSI or Social Security disability payments.

\*Less than 0.05 percent.

Table 23

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY AMOUNT OF  
MONTHLY FOOD STAMP BENEFIT

Amount of Monthly Benefit <sup>a</sup>	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
\$ 10 or less	435	5.7%
11 - 25	492	6.4
26 - 50	972	12.6
51 - 75	1,662	21.6
76 - 100	757	9.8
101 - 150	1,645	21.4
151 - 200	1,010	13.1
201 - 300	603	7.8
301 or more	121	1.6
Total	7,698	100.0
Average Benefit	\$103	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>The maximum monthly benefit varies by area (see Appendix E).

Table 24  
AVERAGE MONTHLY FOOD STAMP BENEFIT BY GROSS MONTHLY  
INCOME AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Gross Monthly Income	Household Size								Average Benefit Per Household
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
None	\$70	129	183	233	277	332	367	0	\$126
\$ 1- 99	70	128	183	233	277	332	*	578	116
100-199	65	121	177	229	270	332	362	422	127
200-299	36	101	156	207	254	309	351	406	83
300-399	26	72	129	177	226	281	315	381	95
400-499	16	46	102	153	190	248	277	341	103
500-599	11	32	82	124	165	219	241	326	108
600-699	*	24	64	102	137	196	225	369	113
700-799	0	11	40	81	116	157	175	298	108
800-899	0	10	36	66	92	137	156	223	101
900-999	0	0	14	57	81	103	155	211	120
1000 +	0	*	95	64	62	99	90	181	136
Average Benefit per Household	\$44	82	123	154	175	214	215	226	\$103

SOURCE: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

\*Average benefit was not computed for categories with less than 500 households.

Table 25

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY TOTAL COUNTABLE  
RESOURCES FOR ALL HOUSEHOLDS AND HOUSEHOLDS WITH  
ELDERLY OR DISABLED

Value of Countable Resources <sup>a</sup>	All Households		Households With Elderly <sup>b</sup>		Households With Elderly or Disabled <sup>c</sup>	
	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent
None	5,876	76.3%	1,047	65.0%	1,534	69.1%
\$ 1 - 500	1,507	19.6	405	25.2	513	23.1
501 - 1,000	204	2.7	97	6.0	106	4.8
1,000 - 1,500	81	1.0	48	3.0	53	2.4
1,501 - 1,750	7	0.1	6	0.4	6	0.3
1,751 - 2,000	5	0.1	1	0.1	1	*
2,001 - 3,000	5	0.1	4	0.2	5	0.2
Unknown	13	0.1	2	0.1	3	0.1
Total	7,698	100.0	1,611	100.0	2,220	100.0
Average Value	\$62		\$138		\$112	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Statutory requirements in effect in August 1981 included as "countable" resources all types of assets except (1) equity in a home and (2) certain specified resources that cannot be readily liquidated or that are needed for employment or self-employment. At the time these data were collected, the resource limit for most households was \$1,500. Households of two or more, at least one of whom was age 60 or older, were allowed up to \$3,000.

<sup>b</sup>Households with at least one person age 60 or more.

<sup>c</sup>Households with at least one person age 60 or more or with SSI income and no member age 60 or more.

\*Less than 0.05 percent.

Table 26  
DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY  
TYPE OF MOST RECENT ACTION

Most Recent Action	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
Initial Certification <sup>a</sup>	1,752	22.7%
Recertification	5,932	77.1
Unknown	14	0.2
Total	7,698	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Includes both households certified for the first time and previously certified households who have not received benefits for at least 30 days.

Table 27

COMPARISON OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH AND WITHOUT  
EXPEDITED SERVICE BY PRESENCE OF GROSS AND  
NET MONTHLY INCOME

	Households With Expedited Service <sup>a</sup>		Households Without Expedited Service		Unknown	
	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent
Gross Income = 0	169	45.7%	392	5.4%	1	2.9%
Gross Income > 0	200	54.3	6,902	94.6	34	97.1
Net Income = 0	241	65.3%	1,196	16.4%	6	17.6%
Net Income > 0	128	34.7	6,098	83.6	28	82.4
Total	369	100.0	7,294	100.0	35	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Households which initially received expedited service for the certification period in effect in August 1981.



Table 28  
DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY LENGTH OF  
CERTIFICATION PERIOD

Months in Certification Period	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
1	182	2.4%
2	259	3.4
3	795	10.3
4	356	4.6
5	226	2.9
6	1,854	24.1
7	635	8.2
8	231	3.0
9	133	1.7
10	121	1.6
11	143	1.9
12+	2,658	34.5
Unknown	105	1.4
Total	7,698	100.0
Average Length	7.8	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

Table 29  
DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY  
HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Household Size	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
1	2,502	32.5%
2	1,722	22.4
3	1,398	18.2
4	996	12.9
5	512	6.7
6	302	3.9
7	124	1.6
8+	142	1.8
Total	7,698	100.0
Average Size	2.7	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

Table 30  
AGE RELATED CHARACTERISTICS OF  
PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS

	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
Households with Elderly <sup>a</sup>	1,611	20.9%
Single person elderly households <sup>b</sup>	1,151	15.0
Headed by female	922	12.0
Headed by male	228	3.0
Unknown	1	*
Other elderly households <sup>c</sup>	460	6.0
Headed by female	169	2.2
Headed by male	286	3.7
Unknown	5	0.1
Households with Children <sup>d</sup>	4,345	56.4
Headed by female	3,320	43.1
Headed by male	1,001	13.0
Unknown	24	0.3
Households with Disabled <sup>e</sup>	609	7.9
Headed by female	414	5.4
Headed by male	194	2.5
Unknown	1	*

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more.

<sup>b</sup>Includes elderly single persons living alone or as a separate food stamp unit in a larger household.

<sup>c</sup>Includes elderly couples and other multiperson households with elderly members.

<sup>d</sup>Households with at least one member age 17 or less.

<sup>e</sup>Households with SSI income and no member age 60 or more.

\*Less than 0.05 percent.

Table 31

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY HOUSEHOLD SIZE,  
NUMBER OF ELDERLY, NUMBER OF CHILDREN, AND NUMBER  
OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

	Household Size								Number of Households (000)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Number of Elderly <sup>a</sup>									
0	1,351	1,407	1,344	966	492	284	111	131	6,087
1	1,151	131	36	26	20	13	11	6	1,393
2	0	184	18	4	0	4	2	5	218
Number of Children <sup>b</sup>									
0	2,474	623	118	67	30	13	9	17	3,352
1	27	1,057	362	37	9	1	0	0	1,494
2	0	41	914	369	45	11	6	3	1,389
3	0	0	4	521	233	42	6	5	811
4	0	0	0	2	194	143	19	12	371
5+	0	0	0	0	0	92	84	105	281
Number of School Age Children <sup>c</sup>									
0	2,484	1,176	511	229	59	19	10	17	4,505
1	17	541	456	232	72	25	3	4	1,351
2	0	5	429	263	126	41	13	10	888
3	0	0	1	271	159	79	32	16	560
4	0	0	0	0	96	93	38	29	256
5+	0	0	0	0	0	44	27	66	138
Total	2,502	1,722	1,398	996	512	302	124	143	7,698

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Persons age 60 or more.

<sup>b</sup>Persons age 17 or less.

<sup>c</sup>Persons age 5 to 17.

Table 32  
DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS BY AGE AND SEX

Age	Female		Male		All Participants <sup>a</sup>	
	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent
4 or less	1,576	13.0%	1,561	19.0%	3,149	15.3%
5 - 17	3,249	26.9	3,294	40.1	6,568	31.9
18 - 35	3,549	29.3	1,463	17.8	5,023	24.4
36 - 59	1,794	14.8	907	11.0	2,706	13.1
60 or more	1,261	10.4	561	6.8	1,829	8.9
Unknown	665	5.5	430	5.2	1,305	6.3
Total	12,093	100.0	8,216	100.0	20,579	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Total number of participants includes approximately 270,000 participants whose sex was not recorded.

Table 33

## AGE RELATED CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

	Number of Participants (000)	Percent of All Participants
A. <u>Children<sup>a</sup></u>	9,717	47.2
1. <u>Preschool children</u>	3,149	15.3
2. <u>School age children</u>	6,568	31.9
B. <u>Adults<sup>b</sup></u>	7,729	37.6
1. <u>Parents</u>	5,846	28.4
a. <u>Single parents</u>	2,813	13.7
Living with elderly	55	0.3
Disabled	110	0.5
Other	2,648	12.9
b. <u>Multiple parents</u>	3,033	14.7
Living with elderly	98	0.5
Disabled	108	0.5
Living with disabled	170	0.8
Other	2,657	12.9
2. <u>Non Parents</u>	1,883	9.2
a. <u>Single adults</u>	1,335	6.4
Living with elderly	111	0.5
Disabled	276	1.3
Other	948	4.6
b. <u>Multiple adults</u>	548	2.8
Living with elderly	38	0.2
Disabled	57	0.3
Living with disabled	70	0.3
Other	384	1.9
C. <u>Elderly<sup>c</sup></u>	1,829	8.9
D. <u>Age Unknown</u>	1,305	6.3
Total	20,579	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Persons age 17 or less.

<sup>b</sup>Persons age 18 to 59.

<sup>c</sup>Persons age 60 or more.

Table 34

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY RACE  
OR ETHNIC ORIGIN OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD

Race/Ethnic Origin of Household Head	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
Black	2,832	36.8%
White	3,470	45.1
Hispanic	809	10.5
American Indian	92	1.2
Other	161	2.1
Unknown	334	4.3
Total	7,698	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

Table 35

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY  
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

Households with at Least One:	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
Alien	372	4.8%
Migrant	20	0.3
Military	21	0.3
Striker	11	0.1
Student <sup>a</sup>	140	1.8

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Household members 18 years of age or older enrolled at least half-time in a recognized school, training program, or institution of higher education.



Table 36

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY EMPLOYMENT  
STATUS OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD

Employment Status of Household Head	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
Employed Full Time <sup>a</sup>	671	8.7%
Employed Part Time <sup>b</sup>	304	3.9
Self-Employed	83	1.1
Farm Employed	12	0.2
Not Employed	6,415	83.3
Unknown	213	2.8
Total	7,698	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Employed at least 30 hours per week.

<sup>b</sup>Employed less than 30 hours per week.

Table 37

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY WORK REGISTRATION  
STATUS OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD

Work Registration Status of Household Head	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
Required to register for work	1,098	14.3%
Exempt from work registration:	6,371	82.7
Less than 18 or over 60 years old	1,515	19.7
Disabled	1,008	13.1
WIN participant	502	6.5
Caretaker of child or incapacitated adult <sup>a</sup>	2,529	32.8
Recipient of Unemployment Insurance (UI)	134	1.7
Participant in drug addiction or alcoholic treatment program	45	0.6
Employed full-time <sup>b</sup>	608	7.9
Student <sup>c</sup>	30	0.4
Unknown	229	3.0
Total	7,698	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Includes both caretakers of children under 12 and caretakers of children under 18 where another able-bodied parent is registered for work or exempted because of employment.

<sup>b</sup>Employed at least 30 hours per week or receiving weekly earnings equal to or greater than the Federal minimum wage multiplied by 30 hours.

<sup>c</sup>Enrolled at least half-time in a recognized school, training program, or institution of higher education.

Table 38

## DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS BY WORK REGISTRATION STATUS

Work Registration Status	Number of Participants (000)	Percent of All Participants
Required to register for work	1,721	8.4%
Exempt from work registration:	18,136	88.1
Less than 18 or over 60 years old	11,634	56.5
Disabled	1,257	6.1
WIN participant	586	2.8
Caretaker of child or incapacitated adult <sup>a</sup>	3,468	16.9
Recipient of Unemployment Insurance (UI)	166	0.8
Participant in drug addiction or alcoholic treatment program	50	0.2
Employed full-time <sup>b</sup>	789	3.8
Student <sup>c</sup>	186	0.9
Unknown	721	3.5
Total	20,579	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Includes both caretakers of children under 12 and caretakers of children under 18 where another able-bodied parent is registered for work or exempted because of employment.

<sup>b</sup>Employed at least 30 hours per week or receiving weekly earnings equal to or greater than the Federal minimum wage multiplied by 30 hours.

<sup>c</sup>Enrolled at least half-time in a recognized school, training program, or institution of higher education.

Table 39

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS AND BENEFITS  
FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH AND WITHOUT EARNED INCOME

	Households		Benefits	
	Number (000)	Percent	Value (000)	Percent
Households With Earned Income <sup>a</sup>	1,513	19.7%	\$168,349	21.2%
Households With No Earned Income	6,113	79.4	621,184	78.3
Unknown	72	0.9	3,825	0.5
Total	7,698	100.0	793,358	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Earned income includes wages, salaries, self-employment, and farm income.

Table 40

AVERAGE VALUE OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS FOR  
HOUSEHOLDS WITH AND WITHOUT EARNED INCOME<sup>a</sup>

	Households With Earned Income <sup>b</sup>	Households With No Earned Income
(            Income	\$563	\$296
M            Income	\$337	\$161
Tc            ction <sup>c</sup>	\$233	\$153
Co            e Resources	\$ 71	\$ 60
Mo:           y Benefit	\$111	\$102
Household Size	3.6	2.5
Certification Period	5.7	8.3

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes households where presence of earned income is not known.

<sup>b</sup>Earned income includes wages, salaries, self-employment, and farm income.

<sup>c</sup>Includes earned income, dependent care, excess shelter, medical, and standard deduction (see Appendix D).

Table 41  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH AND WITHOUT  
EARNED INCOME FOR SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS<sup>a</sup>

Households With:	Households With Earned Income <sup>b</sup>		Households With No Earned Income	
	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent
Zero Gross Income	0	0.0%	561	9.2%
Zero Net Income	152	10.1	1,288	21.1
Minimum Benefit <sup>c</sup>	70	4.6	352	5.8
Elderly <sup>d</sup>	97	6.4	1,472	24.1
Children <sup>e</sup>	1168	77.2	3,161	51.7
School Age Children <sup>f</sup>	902	59.6	2,277	37.2

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes households where presence of earned income is not known.

<sup>b</sup>Earned income includes wages, salaries, self-employment, and farm income.

<sup>c</sup>Minimum benefit is \$10 for one- and two-person households.

<sup>d</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more.

<sup>e</sup>Households with at least one member age 17 or less.

<sup>f</sup>Households with at least one member age 5 to 17.

Table 42

COMPARISON OF DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS ON  
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH AND WITHOUT  
EARNED INCOME<sup>a</sup>

	Households With Earned Income <sup>b</sup>		Households With No Earned Income	
	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent
Household Size				
1 - 2	463	30.6%	3,703	60.6%
3 - 4	618	40.8	1,762	28.8
5+	432	28.6	648	10.6
Gross Income				
None	0	0.0	561	9.2
\$ 1 - 99	53	3.5	198	3.2
100 - 199	95	6.3	796	13.0
200 - 299	116	7.7	1,766	28.9
300 - 399	175	11.5	1,380	22.6
400 - 499	179	11.8	693	11.3
500+	896	59.2	718	11.8
Net Income				
None	152	10.1	1,288	21.1
\$ 1 - 99	139	9.2	1,230	20.1
100 - 199	169	11.2	1,596	26.1
200 - 299	245	16.2	968	15.8
300 - 399	250	16.5	568	9.3
400 - 499	202	13.3	240	3.9
500+	356	23.5	223	3.7
Benefits				
\$ 10 or less	71	4.7	352	5.7
11 - 50	214	14.1	1,221	20.0
51 - 100	481	31.8	1,918	31.4
101 - 200	584	38.6	2,060	33.7
201 - 300	132	8.7	471	7.7
301+	31	2.0	91	1.5
Total	1,513	100.0	6,113	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes households where presence of earned income is not known.

<sup>b</sup>Earned income includes wages, salaries, self-employment, and farm income.

Table 43

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS AND BENEFITS FOR  
HOUSEHOLDS WITH ELDERLY AND NO ELDERLY

	Households		Benefits	
	Number (000)	Percent	Value (000)	Percent
Households With Elderly <sup>a</sup>	1,611	20.9%	\$74,445	9.4%
Households With No Elderly	6,087	79.1	718,913	90.6
Total	7,698	100.0	793,358	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more.



Table 44  
AVERAGE VALUES OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS FOR  
HOUSEHOLDS WITH ELDERLY AND NO ELDERLY

	Households With Elderly <sup>a</sup>	Households With No Elderly
Gross Monthly Income	\$329	\$354
Net Monthly Income	\$183	\$199
Total Deduction <sup>b</sup>	\$155	\$173
Countable Resources <sup>c</sup>	\$138	\$ 42
Monthly Benefit	\$ 46	\$118
Household Size	1.5	3.0
Certification Period	10.2	7.2

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more.

<sup>b</sup>Includes earned income, dependent care, excess shelter, medical, and standard deduction (see Appendix D).

<sup>c</sup>At the time these data were collected, the resource limit for most households was \$1,500. Households of two or more, at least one of whom was age 60 or older, were allowed up to \$3,000.

Table 45

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH ELDERLY AND  
NO ELDERLY FOR SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Households With:	Households With Elderly <sup>a</sup>		Households With No Elderly	
	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent
Zero Gross Income	28	1.8%	533	8.8%
Zero Net Income	144	8.9	1,299	21.3
Minimum Benefit <sup>b</sup>	307	19.1	127	2.1
Children <sup>c</sup>	150	9.3	4,195	68.9
School Age Children <sup>d</sup>	138	8.6	3,055	50.2

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more.

<sup>b</sup>Minimum benefit is \$10 for one- and two-person households.

<sup>c</sup>Households with at least one member age 17 or less.

<sup>d</sup>Households with at least one member age 5 to 17.

Table 46

COMPARISON OF DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS ON  
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH ELDERLY  
AND NO ELDERLY

	Households With Elderly <sup>a</sup>		Households With No Elderly	
	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent
Household Size				
1 - 2	1,466	91.0%	2,758	45.3%
3 - 4	84	5.2	2,310	38.0
5+	61	3.8	1,019	16.7
Gross Income				
None	28	1.8	533	8.8
\$ 1 - 99	14	0.8	238	3.9
100 - 199	76	4.7	816	13.4
200 - 299	708	43.9	1,203	19.8
300 - 399	477	29.6	1,113	18.3
400 - 499	185	11.5	692	11.4
500+	124	7.7	1,493	24.5
Net Income				
None	144	8.9	1,299	21.3
\$ 1 - 99	283	17.6	1,097	18.0
100 - 199	599	37.1	1,201	19.7
200 - 299	349	21.7	883	14.5
300 - 399	148	9.2	672	11.0
400 - 499	44	2.8	399	6.6
500+	44	2.7	536	8.8
Benefits				
\$ 10 or less	307	19.1	128	2.1
11 - 50	789	48.9	676	11.1
51 - 100	384	23.8	2,035	33.4
101 - 200	104	6.5	2,551	41.9
201 - 300	21	1.3	582	9.6
301+	7	0.4	115	1.9
Total	1,611	100.0	6,087	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more.

Table 47

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS AND BENEFITS FOR  
HOUSEHOLDS WITH DISABLED AND NO DISABLED

	Households		Benefits	
	Number (000)	Percent	Value (000)	Percent
Households With Disabled <sup>a</sup>	609	7.9%	\$47,896	6.0%
Households With No Disabled	7,089	92.1	745,462	94.0
Total	7,698	100.0	793,358	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Households with SSI income and no member age 60 or more.

Table 48

AVERAGE VALUES OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS FOR  
HOUSEHOLDS WITH DISABLED AND NO DISABLED

	Households With Disabled <sup>a</sup>	Households With No Disabled
Gross Monthly Income	\$398	\$345
Net Monthly Income	\$235	\$192
Total Deduction <sup>b</sup>	\$169	\$169
Countable Resources	\$ 43	\$ 64
Monthly Benefit	\$ 79	\$105
Household Size	2.5	2.7
Certification Period	8.9	7.7

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Households with SSI income and no member age 60 or more.

<sup>b</sup>Includes earned income, dependent care, excess shelter, medical, and standard deduction (see Appendix D).

Table 49

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH DISABLED AND  
NO DISABLED FOR SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Households With:	Households With Disabled <sup>a</sup>		Households With No Disabled	
	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent
Zero Gross Income	0	0.0%	561	7.9%
Zero Net Income	56	9.2	1,387	19.6
Minimum Benefit <sup>b</sup>	34	5.6	400	5.6
Children <sup>c</sup>	226	37.0	4,120	58.1
School Age Children <sup>d</sup>	199	32.7	2,993	42.2

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Households with SSI income and no member age 60 or more.

<sup>b</sup>Minimum benefit is \$10 for one- and two-person households.

<sup>c</sup>Households with at least one member age 17 or less.

<sup>d</sup>Households with at least one member age 5 to 17.

Table 50

COMPARISON OF DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS ON  
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH DISABLED  
AND NO DISABLED

	Households With Disabled <sup>a</sup>		Households With No Disabled	
	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent
Household Size				
1 - 2	399	65.5%	3,824	54.0%
3 - 4	116	19.1	2,278	32.1
5+	94	15.4	986	13.9
Gross Income				
None	0	0.0	561	7.9
\$ 1 - 99	1	0.1	250	3.5
100 - 199	20	3.3	871	12.3
200 - 299	238	39.0	1,673	23.6
300 - 399	148	24.2	1,442	20.3
400 - 499	66	10.8	810	11.4
500+	137	22.5	1,480	20.9
Net Income				
None	56	9.2	1,387	19.6
\$ 1 - 99	117	19.2	1,263	17.8
100 - 199	178	29.3	1,621	22.9
200 - 299	90	14.8	1,142	16.1
300 - 399	74	12.2	746	10.5
400 - 499	29	4.7	415	5.9
500+	65	10.7	514	7.3
Benefits				
\$ 10 or less	34	5.6	401	5.7
11 - 50	215	35.2	1,250	17.6
51 - 100	192	31.5	2,227	31.4
101 - 200	136	22.3	2,520	35.5
201 - 301	28	4.6	575	8.1
301+	5	0.8	117	1.6
Total	609	100.0	7089	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Households with SSI income and no member age 60 or more.

Table 51

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS AND BENEFITS FOR  
HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN, SCHOOL AGE  
CHILDREN, AND NO CHILDREN

	Households		Benefits	
	Number (000)	Percent	Value (000)	Percent
Households With Children <sup>a</sup>	4,345	56.5%	\$613,736	77.4%
Households With School Age Children <sup>b</sup>	3,192	41.5	481,222	60.7
Households With No Children	3,352	43.5	179,622	22.6
Total	7,698	100.0	793,358	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Households with at least one member age 17 or less.

<sup>b</sup>Households with at least one member age 5 to 17.



Table 52

AVERAGE VALUES OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS FOR  
HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN, SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN, AND  
NO CHILDREN

	Households With Children <sup>a</sup>	Households With School Age Children <sup>b</sup>	Households With No Children
Gross Monthly Income	\$408	\$435	\$273
Net Monthly Income	\$239	\$263	\$139
Total Deduction <sup>c</sup>	\$179	\$182	\$156
Countable Resources	\$ 46	\$ 48	\$ 83
Monthly Benefit	\$141	\$151	\$ 54
Household Size	3.6	4.0	1.4
Certification Period	7.1	7.0	8.7

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Households with at least one member age 17 or less.

<sup>b</sup>Households with at least one member age 5 to 17.

<sup>c</sup>Includes earned income, dependent care, excess shelter, medical, and standard deduction (see Appendix D).

Table 53

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN, SCHOOL AGE  
CHILDREN, AND NO CHILDREN FOR SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Households with:	Households With Children <sup>c</sup>		Households With School Children <sup>d</sup>		Households With No Children	
	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent
Zero Gross Income	195	4.5%	130	4.1%	366	10.9%
Zero Net Income	572	13.2	397	12.4	871	26.0
Minimum Benefit <sup>a</sup>	19	0.4	11	0.3	414	12.4
Elderly <sup>b</sup>	150	3.5	138	4.3	1,461	43.6
School Age Children <sup>d</sup>	3,192	73.5	3,192	100.0	0	0.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Minimum benefit is \$10 for one- and two-person households.

<sup>b</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more.

<sup>c</sup>Households with at least one member age 17 or less.

<sup>d</sup>Households with at least one member age 5 to 17.

Table 54

COMPARISON OF DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS ON SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS  
FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN, SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN, AND NO CHILDREN

	Households With Children		Households With School Age Children		Households With No Children	
	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent
Household Size						
1 - 2	1,126	25.9%	563	17.7%	3,098	92.4%
3 - 4	2,210	50.8	1,654	51.8	185	5.5
5+	1,010	23.3	975	30.5	70	2.1
Gross Income						
None	195	4.5	130	4.1	366	10.9
\$ 1 - 99	107	2.5	68	2.1	144	4.3
100 - 199	462	10.6	290	9.1	429	12.8
200 - 299	753	17.3	450	14.1	1,158	34.5
300 - 399	932	21.4	690	21.6	658	19.6
400 - 499	559	12.9	457	14.3	318	9.5
500+	1,337	30.8	1,106	34.7	280	8.3
Net Income						
None	572	13.1	397	12.4	871	26.0
\$ 1 - 99	698	16.1	423	13.2	682	20.3
100 - 199	913	21.0	617	19.4	886	26.4
200 - 299	739	17.0	563	17.6	493	14.7
300 - 399	556	12.8	447	14.0	265	7.9
400 - 499	368	8.5	291	9.1	76	2.3
500+	501	11.5	454	14.3	79	2.4
Benefits						
\$ 10 or less	21	0.5	11	0.3	414	12.4
11 - 50	231	5.3	149	4.7	1,234	36.8
51 - 100	999	23.0	647	20.3	1,419	42.3
101 - 200	2,396	55.1	1,739	54.5	259	7.7
201 - 300	582	13.4	530	16.6	21	0.6
301+	117	2.7	115	3.6	5	0.2
Total	4,345	100.0	3,192	100.0	3,352	100.0

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

Table 55

COMPARISON OF AVERAGE VALUES OF SELECTED  
CHARACTERISTICS FOR AUGUST 1981, AUGUST 1980, AND NOVEMBER 1979

	November 1979	August 1980 <sup>a</sup>	August 1981
Gross Monthly Income	\$314	\$326	\$349
Net Monthly Income	\$196	\$194	\$196
Total Deduction	\$132 <sup>b</sup>	\$148 <sup>c</sup>	\$169 <sup>d</sup>
Countable Resources	\$ 65	\$ 66	\$ 62
Monthly Benefit	\$ 82	\$ 89	\$103
Household Size	2.7	2.8	2.7

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.  
August 1980 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.  
November 1979 Survey of Food Stamp Household Characteristics.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes Alaska and Hawaii.

<sup>b</sup>Includes earned income, dependent care, excess shelter, and \$70 standard deduction.

<sup>c</sup>Includes earned income, dependent care, excess shelter, medical, and \$75 standard deduction.

<sup>d</sup>Includes earned income, dependent care, excess shelter, medical, and standard deduction (see Appendix D).

Table 56

COMPARISON OF PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH  
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS FOR AUGUST 1981, AUGUST 1980,  
AND NOVEMBER 1979

Households With:	Percent of All Households		
	November 1979	August 1980 <sup>a</sup>	August 1981
Zero Gross Income	6.9%	8.1%	7.3%
Zero Net Income	12.6	16.6	18.7
Minimum Benefit	7.8	6.9	5.6
Elderly <sup>b</sup>	24.2	22.6	20.9
Children <sup>c</sup>	51.4	59.9	56.4
School Age Children <sup>d</sup>	38.5	44.4	41.5

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.  
August 1980 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.  
November 1979 Survey of Food Stamp Household Characteristics.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes Alaska and Hawaii.

<sup>b</sup>Households with at least one member age 60 or more.

<sup>c</sup>In November 1979, households of three or more, at least one of whom is age 17 or less. In August 1980 and 1981, households with at least one member age 17 or less.

<sup>d</sup>In November 1979, households of three or more, at least one of whom is age 5 to 17. In August 1980 and 1981, households with at least one member age 5 to 17.

## Appendix A

SELECTED TABLES FOR THE 50 STATES, DISTRICT  
OF COLUMBIA, PUERTO RICO, GUAM, AND THE  
VIRGIN ISLANDS

Table A-1	Distribution of Participating Households by Gross Monthly Income and Household Size in the 50 States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands
Table A-2	Distribution of Participating Households by Net Monthly Income and Household Size in the 50 States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands
Table A-3	Distribution of Participating Households by Amount of Total Deduction in the 50 States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands
Table A-4	Average Total Deduction for All Households by Gross Monthly Income and Household Size in the 50 States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands
Table A-5	Distribution of Participating Households by Amount of Monthly Food Stamp Benefit in the 50 States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands
Table A-6	Average Monthly Food Stamp Benefit by Gross Monthly Income and Household Size in the 50 States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands

Table A-1

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY GROSS MONTHLY INCOME  
AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE IN THE 50 STATES, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, PUERTO RICO,  
GUAM, AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Gross Monthly Income	1	2	3	Household Size					8+	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
				4	5	6	7				
None	312	110	83	75	31	13	7	3		632	7.7%
\$ 1- 99	143	100	53	24	17	2	3	9		352	4.3
100-199	432	220	186	89	41	28	9	5		1,009	12.3
200-299	1,076	471	213	97	43	37	13	11		1,961	23.8
300-399	501	417	395	230	65	28	6	6		1,648	20.0
400-499	63	329	190	182	81	44	8	16		912	11.1
500-599	27	113	236	158	67	69	16	17		704	8.6
600-699	*	36	95	117	102	34	16	10		410	5.0
700-799	0	13	40	66	49	52	16	12		248	3.0
800-899	0	1	18	46	43	27	18	11		164	2.0
900-999	0	0	1	9	27	16	4	20		77	0.9
1000+	0	*	1	4	7	13	25	54		104	1.3
Number of Households	2,555	1,810	1,511	1,096	573	365	139	174		8,222	100.0
Percent of All Households	31.1	22.0	18.4	13.3	7.0	4.4	1.7	2.1		100.0	
Average Gross Income	\$222	299	359	421	500	535	642	760		\$342	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

\*Less than 500 households.

Table A-2

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY NET MONTHLY INCOME AND  
HOUSEHOLD SIZE IN THE 50 STATES, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, PUERTO RICO,  
GUAM, AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Net Monthly Income	1	2	3	Household Size					8+	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
				4	5	6	7				
None	780	295	240	145	68	28	13	13		1,581	19.2%
\$ 1- 99	639	422	208	111	58	32	12	5		1,489	18.1
100-199	791	456	352	190	55	38	9	8		1,899	23.1
200-299	310	347	298	199	67	38	6	15		1,282	15.6
300-399	35	231	240	180	99	66	10	10		870	10.6
400-499	0	59	133	150	80	43	26	15		506	6.1
500-599	0	*	39	92	65	50	9	13		268	3.3
600-699	0	0	0	28	57	36	15	16		151	1.8
700-799	0	0	0	1	24	18	17	23		83	1.0
800-899	0	0	0	0	1	14	5	19		38	0.5
900-999	0	0	0	0	0	1	17	15		34	0.4
1000+	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	20		22	0.3
Number of Households	2,555	1,810	1,511	1,096	573	365	139	174		8,222	100.0
Percent of All Households	31.1	22.0	18.4	13.3	7.0	4.4	1.7	2.1		100.0	
Average Net Income	\$93	153	198	257	330	374	482	594		\$194	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

\*Less than 500 households.



TABLE A-3

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY AMOUNT  
OF TOTAL DEDUCTION IN THE 50 STATES, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,  
PUERTO RICO, GUAM, AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Amount of Total Deduction <sup>a</sup>	Number of Households (000)	Percentage of All Households
\$ 1 - 50	197	2.4%
51 - 100	2,069	25.2
101 - 150	1,413	17.2
151 - 200	2,972	36.1
201 - 250	675	8.2
251 - 300	457	5.6
300+	439	5.3
Total	8,222	100.0
Average Deduction for Claiming Households	\$ 164	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Includes earned income, dependent care, excess shelter, medical, and standard deduction (see Appendix D).

TABLE A-4

AVERAGE TOTAL DEDUCTION<sup>a</sup> FOR ALL HOUSEHOLDS BY GROSS MONTHLY INCOME  
AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE IN THE 50 STATES, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, PUERTO RICO,  
GUAM, AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Gross Monthly Income	Household Size								Average Total Deduction
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
None	\$119	120	135	126	115	104	120	50	\$ 122
\$ 1- 99	139	112	110	131	112	157	87	77	123
100-199	157	140	152	156	144	160	164	103	152
200-299	152	160	162	157	171	132	191	125	155
300-399	173	159	164	164	178	160	149	114	166
400-499	188	157	161	170	150	162	147	122	162
500-599	264	202	190	173	174	167	125	120	184
600-699	*	278	250	194	184	182	175	149	209
700-799	0	302	267	238	206	159	126	144	212
800-899	0	328	324	280	215	196	138	153	230
900-999	0	0	360	322	290	201	204	141	233
1000 +	0	*	488	407	300	289	259	261	274
Average Total Deduction	\$ 154	158	173	177	178	168	168	168	\$164

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>Total deduction includes earned income, dependent care, excess shelter, medical and standard deduction (see Appendix D).

\*Average deduction was not computed for categories with less than 500 households.

Table A-5

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPATING HOUSEHOLDS BY AMOUNT OF  
MONTHLY FOOD STAMP BENEFIT IN THE 50 STATES, DISTRICT  
OF COLUMBIA, PUERTO RICO, GUAM, AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Amount of Monthly Benefit <sup>a</sup>	Number of Households (000)	Percent of All Households
\$ 10 or less	438	5.3%
11 - 25	495	6.0
26 - 50	1,010	12.3
51 - 75	1,716	20.9
76 - 100	805	9.8
101 - 150	1,760	21.4
151 - 200	1,104	13.4
201 - 300	725	8.8
301 or more	168	2.0
Total	8,222	100.0
Average Benefit	\$107	

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

<sup>a</sup>The maximum monthly benefit varies by area (see Appendix E).

Table A-6

AVERAGE MONTHLY FOOD STAMP BENEFIT BY GROSS MONTHLY  
INCOME AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE IN THE 50 STATES,  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, PUERTO RICO,  
GUAM, AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Gross Monthly Income	Household Size								Average Benefit Per Household
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
None	\$70	128	182	230	272	328	367	398	\$133
\$ 1- 99	70	126	178	226	267	332	348	431	136
100-199	63	118	174	224	264	320	353	442	129
200-299	36	100	155	205	252	290	355	399	87
300-399	26	71	128	176	225	270	302	350	97
400-499	16	46	101	151	189	245	268	353	106
500-599	11	32	80	123	164	215	241	332	110
600-699	*	24	64	102	137	194	225	383	114
700-799	0	11	40	81	115	157	175	298	110
800-899	0	10	37	64	92	137	156	223	100
900-999	0	0	14	57	82	108	155	211	121
1000 +	0	*	95	64	62	101	93	181	137
Average Benefit Per Household	\$44	83	124	156	177	218	223	281	\$107

Source: August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample.

\*Average benefit was not computed for categories with less than 500 households.

## Appendix B

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET 1981  
POVERTY INCOME GUIDELINES<sup>a</sup>

Household Size	Continental U.S., Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$ 4,310	\$ 5,410	\$ 4,980
2	5,690	7,130	6,560
3	7,070	8,850	8,140
4	8,450	10,570	9,720
5	9,830	12,290	11,300
6	11,210	14,010	12,880
7	12,590	15,730	14,460
8 <sup>b</sup>	13,970	17,450	16,040

Source: Office of Management and Budget.

<sup>a</sup>Annual income for nonfarm families.

<sup>b</sup>For households with more than eight members, add \$1,380 in the continental U.S., Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands; \$1,720 in Alaska; and \$1,580 in Hawaii for each additional person.

## Appendix C

MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE NET MONTHLY FOOD STAMP INCOME  
ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS IN AUGUST 1981<sup>a</sup>

Household Size	Continental U.S., Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$ 360	\$ 451	\$ 415
2	475	595	547
3	590	738	679
4	705	881	810
5	820	1,025	942
6	935	1,168	1,074
7	1,050	1,311	1,205
8 <sup>b</sup>	1,165	1,455	1,337

Source: Program records, Food and Nutrition Service.

<sup>a</sup>The food stamp net income standards are equal to the OMB poverty income guidelines (Appendix A) divided by 12, rounded up to the nearest dollar.

<sup>b</sup>For households with more than eight members, add \$115 in the continental U.S., Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands; \$144 in Alaska; and \$132 in Hawaii for each additional person.

## Appendix D

VALUE OF STANDARD AND MAXIMUM DEPENDENT CARE/  
EXCESS SHELTER DEDUCTIONS IN CONTINENTAL UNITED  
STATES AND OUTLYING AREAS IN AUGUST 1981

Area	Standard	Dependent Care/ Excess Shelter <sup>a</sup>
Continental U.S.	\$ 85	\$115
Alaska	145	200
Hawaii	120	165
Guam	170	140
Puerto Rico	50	40
Virgin Islands	75	85

Source: Program records, Food and Nutrition Service.

<sup>a</sup>Limit on combined dependent care/excess shelter deduction for households with no member age 60 or more or receiving SSI or Social Security disability payments.

## Appendix E

VALUE OF MAXIMUM COUPON ALLOTMENT (THRIFTY FOOD PLAN) IN  
CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES AND OUTLYING AREAS  
IN AUGUST 1981

Household Size	Continental United States <sup>a</sup>	Alaska	Hawaii	Guam	Puerto Rico	Virgin Islands
1	\$ 70	\$108	\$ 95	\$101	\$ 66	\$ 88
2	128	197	175	185	122	161
3	183	293	250	265	174	230
4	233	359	318	337	221	292
5	277	426	378	400	262	347
6	332	512	453	480	315	416
7	367	565	501	531	348	460
8 <sup>b</sup>	419	646	572	607	398	526

Source: Program records, Food and Nutrition Service.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes Alaska and Hawaii.

<sup>b</sup>For households with more than eight members, add \$53 in the continental United States, \$81 in Alaska, \$72 in Hawaii, \$76 in Guam, \$50 in Puerto Rico, and \$66 in the Virgin Islands for each additional person.



## APPENDIX F

## SOURCE AND RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATES

Background

The summary tables are derived from a sample of households selected for review as part of the Food Stamp Quality Control (QC) System. This system is an ongoing review of food stamp household circumstances to determine (1) if households are eligible for participation and receiving the correct coupon allotment or (2) if household participation is correctly denied or terminated. The system is based on a national probability sample of approximately 45,000 participating food stamp households and a somewhat smaller number of denials and terminations every six months. The national sample of participating households is stratified by the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. Semiannual State samples range from a minimum of 150 to a maximum of 1200 reviews depending on the size of the State's caseload. State agencies select an independent sample each month whose size is generally proportional to the size of the monthly participating caseload.<sup>1</sup> The survey reported here relies on the August 1981 Food Stamp Quality Control sample of participating households.

Target Universe

The target universe of this study included all participating households (active cases) subject to quality control review in August 1981 in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. The August 1981 participating caseload in Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands was also sampled, but these results are not generally included in the tabulations.

While almost all participating food stamp households are included in the target universe, certain types not amenable to QC review are not. Specifically, the active universe includes all households receiving food stamps during a review period except those in which the participants died or moved outside the State, received benefits by a disaster certification authorized by FNS, received benefits under a 60-day continuation of certification, were under investigation for Food Stamp Program fraud (including those with pending fraud hearings), were appealing a notice of adverse action when the review date falls within the time period covered by continued participation pending a hearing, or received restored benefits in accordance with the FNS-approved State manual but who were otherwise

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<sup>1</sup>Several States have integrated the Food Stamp, AFDC, and Medicaid QC sample selection and review process. In these States, monthly sample size is not necessarily proportional to monthly caseload size.

ineligible. The sampling unit within the active universe is the food stamp household as defined in an FNS-approved State manual.

### Weighting

The tabulations in this report are based on a total of 7,742 valid observations.<sup>2</sup> An additional 229 observations were available from Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. The sample findings have been weighted by the number of participating households in August 1981 as reported in the Food Stamp Program Statistical Summary of Operations: August 1981 (January 28, 1982). The case record weights in Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Oregon, and Wisconsin were adjusted to reflect the disproportionate integrated QC sample designs in those States.

### Comparison to Participation Data

The following table presents a comparison of the preliminary estimates to aggregate program participation data (excluding Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands) in the Food Stamp Program Statistical Summary of Operations for August 1981 (January 28, 1982):

	<u>Statistical Summary of Operations</u>	<u>August 1981 QC Sample</u>
Number of Households <sup>3</sup>	7,696,877	7,697,776
Number of Participants	20,361,878	20,579,493
Value of Benefits	\$818,023,908	\$793,358,177
Average Household Size	2.64	2.67
Average Bonus per Person	\$40.17	\$38.55

### Completion Rates

Failure to complete reviews for all cases selected subject to review can bias the sample results if the characteristics of unreviewed households are significantly different from those of reviewed households. While there are no direct measures of such differences, the ratio of valid observations to sample cases selected for review provides an indication of

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<sup>2</sup>Approximately 21 cases were deleted from the sample because they contained incomplete or inconsistent information. Sample weights were adjusted proportionately within each State to account for these deletions.

<sup>3</sup>This estimate was constrained by an adjustment to the sample weights.

the magnitude of any potential bias. The expected number of cases subject to review in the August 1981 sample (equal to one-sixth of all cases reported as subject to review during April-September 1981), the number of valid observations, and the estimated completion rates are shown below:

	<u>50 States and D.C.</u>	<u>Outlying Areas</u>	<u>Total</u>
Number of cases selected subject to review	8,339	247	8,586
Number of cases completed	7,742	229	7,971
Estimated completion rate	92.8%	92.7%	92.8%

These rates compare quite favorably with other surveys of this nature.

APPENDIX G  
DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

137  
MPRI-762

QUALITY CONTROL REVIEW DATA SHEET

CARD NO. 1

I. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

A. STATE AND LOCAL AGENCY  
FIPS CODE

--	--	--	--	--	--

B. QC REVIEW NUMBER

--	--	--	--	--	--

C. SAMPLE MONTH AND YEAR

--	--	--	--

D. SAMPLE INFORMATION

FRAME

☐

STRATUM IDENTIFICATION

☐

MATCHING FORMS

☐

E. DISPOSITION OF CASE REVIEW

01 REVIEW COMPLETED

02 NOT SUBJECT TO REVIEW

REVIEW

03 UNABLE TO LOCATE CASE RECORD OR PARTICIPANT

04 UNABLE TO COMPLETE, PARTICIPANT REFUSES TO COOPERATE

05 REVIEW NOT PROCESSED

06 OTHER (Specify)

--	--

II. CASE RECORD INFORMATION

F. MOST RECENT ACTION

ACTIVE CASES:

1. INITIAL CERTIFICATION

2. RECERTIFICATION

NEGATIVE CASES:

3. DENIED PARTICIPATION  
4. TERMINATION

☐

H. NUMBER SAVED TO

--	--

SINCE LAST CERTIFICATION ACTION

--	--

N. CERTIFICATION PERIOD

I. RACE OF HOUSEHOLD

1. BLACK

2. HISPANIC

3. OTHER

☐

4. WHITE

5. AMERICAN INDIAN

J. SPECIFIC HOUSEHOLD MEMBER CLASSIFICATION

1. YES

ALIEN

☐

MIGRANT

☐

STRIKER

☐

2. NO

K. AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

☐

L. RECEIVED EXPEDITED SERVICE

☐

M. CERTIFIED HOUSEHOLD SIZE

--	--

N. FOOD STAMP HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

AGE	SEX	RELATIONSHIP	EMPLOYMENT/WORK REGISTRATION	INCOME SOURCES										
HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD														
1. <table><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>			<table><tr><td></td></tr></table>		<table><tr><td>0</td></tr></table>	0	<table><tr><td></td></tr></table>		<table><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>			<table><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>		
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AGE	SEX	RELATIONSHIP	EMPLOYMENT WORK REGISTRATION	INCOME SOURCES	
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

## D. MONTHLY INCOME

EARNED INCOME \_\_\_\_\_  
 PENSIONS, DISC.  
 OTHER BENEFITS \_\_\_\_\_  
 PA OR GA \_\_\_\_\_  
 OSI \_\_\_\_\_  
 TOTAL OTHER INCOME \_\_\_\_\_  
 TOTAL GROSS INCOME \_\_\_\_\_  
 NET INCOME \_\_\_\_\_

## E. RESOURCE AMOUNT

LIQUID RESOURCES \_\_\_\_\_  
 REAL PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_  
*Exclude home and lot.*  
 NON-EXCLUDED VEHICLES \_\_\_\_\_  
*Fair market value over \$4,000*  
 NON-EXCLUDED VEHICLES \_\_\_\_\_  
*Equity value*  
 OTHER NON-LIQUID RESOURCES \_\_\_\_\_  
 TOTAL RESOURCES \_\_\_\_\_

## F. DEDUCTION INFORMATION

ACTUAL EARNED INCOME DEDUCTIONS \_\_\_\_\_  
 ACTUAL DEPENDENT CARE EXPENSE \_\_\_\_\_  
 ACTUAL SHELTER EXPENSE \_\_\_\_\_  
 ACTUAL MEDICAL EXPENSE \_\_\_\_\_

## G. COUPON ALLOTMENT RECEIVED

\_\_\_\_\_

## III. REVIEW SUMMARY

## A. STATUS OF CASE

1. AMOUNT CORRECT

2. OVER ISSUANCE

3. UNDER ISSUANCE

4. INELIGIBLE

5. INVALID NEGATIVE CASE

6. INVALID NEGATIVE CASE



F. AMOUNT COUPON ALLOTMENT EXCEEDED IN ERROR

\_\_\_\_\_

# **FOOD STAMP QUALITY CONTROL COMPUTATION SHEET**

WORKSHEET STAMP #1 STEP 1 AND WORK THROUGH STEP 31 OF THE STAMP #1 UNDER 98 SURE TO CHOP ALL CENTS FROM ALL FIGURES EXCEPT INDIVIDUAL SHELTER COSTS IF A NEG- ATIVE NUMBER RESULTS AFTER SUBTRACTING THE TWO NUMBERS INSERT A ZERO		ELIGIBILITY WORKER (1)	CORRECTED CERTIFICATION (2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<b>SELF-EMPLOYMENT INCOME</b> (Include room and board payments)						
<b>HOUSEHOLD MEMBER</b>	<b>SOURCE OF INCOME</b>					
	1. Total gross self-employment income					
	2. Subtract monthly business costs					
	3. List monthly income before taxes					
<b>WAGES, SALARIES OR OTHER INCOME FROM EMPLOYMENT</b> (Do not count excluded income)						
	4. Add line 3 and all wage and salary income					
<b>EDUCATIONAL GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS OR LOANS</b>						
	5. Educational grants received during the month					
	6. Scholarships received during the month					
	7. Subtract line 6 from 5					
	8. Add lines 4 and 7					
<b>UNEARNED INCOME (Do not count excluded income)</b>						
	9. Total unearned					
<b>TOTAL GROSS INCOME</b>						
	10. Add lines 8 and 9					
<b>DEDUCTIONS</b>						
	11. Multiply line 4 by 20% and enter result here					
	12. Enter standard deduction					
	13. Enter medical care exclud- ing income for household members over 65					
	14. Enter dependent care costs (Not to exceed limit)					
	15. Subtract lines 11, 12, 13, and 14 from line 10					

**FOOD STAMP QUALITY CONTROL**  
**COMPUTATION SHEET**  
**(PAGE 2)**

	ELIGIBILITY WORKER (1)	CORRECTED CERTIFICA- TION (2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<b>LIMIT ON SHELTER DEDUCTION</b> Complete next 3 lines to find the maximum amount household can claim as a shelter deduction					
20. Enter maximum limit for combined shelter and dependent care deduction					
21. Enter dependent care deduction (same as line 12)					
22. Subtract line 21 from 20					
<b>SHELTER COSTS</b> Do not drop cents when listing cost of each shelter item. Drop the cents only after adding the cost of these items. Use either the utility standard or the actual cost for each utility bill.					
Rent or mortgage					
Tax and insurance					
Total utility standard					
Telephone (Basic rate)					
Electric					
Gas					
Oil					
Water and Sewerage					
Garbage and trash					
Installation of utilities					
Other					
23. Total shelter costs					
24. Enter amount from line 19					
25. Subtract line 24 from 23 (result equals excess shelter costs)					
<b>NET MONTHLY INCOME</b>					
26. Enter amount from line 18 (income after all deductions except shelter)					
27. If 60 or older enter line 25. For all other households enter amount from line 22 or 25 whichever is less (result equals shelter deduction)					
28. Subtract line 27 from 26 (result equals net monthly income)					
If amount from line 28 is less than income Eligibility Limit, go to line 29.					
<b>ALLOTMENT LEVEL</b>					
29. Enter Thrifty Food Plan for household's size					
30. Multiply line 28 by 30% and enter results here					
31. Subtract line 30 from 29. If result is less than \$10 Enter \$10 (Result equals monthly allotment)					